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THE

INDIAN MUTINY

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GREAT GHAUT, OR BATHING PLACE, AT MUTTRA.

THE

PERSONAL ADVENTURES AND EXPERIENCES

OF

A MAGISTRATE

DURING THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND SUPPRESSION

OF THE

INDIAN MUTINY

32239

By MARK THORNHILL

BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE RETIRED

WITH FRONTISPIECE AND PLAN

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1884

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Errata.

Page 19, line 14, *for* It *read* They
,, 85, l. 14, *insert* comma *after* 'passed'
,, 112, l. 5 from foot, *for* have been warned *read* had been warned
,, 119, l. 1, *for* waggon with sides *read* waggon without sides
,, 126, l. 6 from foot, *for* Kantzow *read* Kantzow
,, 129, l. 2, *for* Hervey *read* Harvey
,, 216, l. 10 from foot, *for* its appearance *read* their appearance

THE INDIAN MUTINY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

After the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, I commenced to write an account of my adventures—illness and other causes delayed me; by the time my narrative was completed, the then interest of the public in the subject was exhausted. Years have since passed, and an interest of another kind has arisen. The events of that time have become history, and to that history my story may prove a contribution, for I saw much that has not been recorded. I have therefore resolved to publish my narrative, which without further preface I commence.

In the beginning of the year 1857 I was magistrate of Muttra, a large city in Upper India. It is situated on the banks of the river Jumna, thirty-four miles from Agra, and on the high road, which runs from thence to Delhi. I had held the appointment about four years, and been married rather longer; we had with us two children, a little girl and a baby. The position of magistrate, though much reduced from what it had been, was still a very fine one. I had a large income and great authority, and

we lived in a degree of state which has long since been abandoned.

Our house was large and handsomely furnished, we had many horses and a great retinue of servants, besides a guard of soldiers and numerous attendants on horse and foot, who were provided for me at the expense of the Government. I had a chest full of silver plate, which stood in the hall, and A—— a great store of Cashmere shawls, pearls, and diamonds.

Our life was secluded, and for the greater part of the year monotonous—travellers seldom passed, and there was little of incident; but among ourselves we were sociable, and in the extreme quiet there was something not unpleasant. In November, when the heat began to moderate, we went into tents and marched about the district. We passed the mornings in long rides and the day under groves of trees. Our life was then a perpetual picnic and very enjoyable.

It was at the end of January 1857, and we had just returned from our tour, when one day as I entered the office I found four little cakes laid on the table, dirty little cakes of the coarsest flour, about the size and thickness of a biscuit. A man had come to a village, and given a cake to the watchman, with injunctions to bake four like it, to distribute them to the watchmen of the adjacent villages, and to desire them to do the same. The watchman obeyed, but at the same time informed the police they had now reported the affair, sending in the cakes. The following day came similar reports from other parts of the district, and we next learnt from the newspapers that these cakes were being distributed in the same manner over all Upper India.

The occurrence was so singular that it attracted the attention of the Government, who directed inquiries; but

notwithstanding all the efforts that were made, it could not be ascertained either by whom the distribution had been contrived, where it commenced, or what it signified. After being a nine days' wonder the matter ceased to be talked about, and was presently for the time forgotten, except by those few who remembered that a similar distribution of cakes had been made in Madras towards the end of the last century, and had been followed by the mutiny of Vellore. These cakes were the famous Chapatties.

After this I fell ill and went to Agra, where my brother was then Secretary to the Government. Early on the morning of the 12th of May a telegram was received by a lady from her niece at Meerut, informing her that one of the native regiments had mutinied, murdered several of the English, and were gone off to Delhi. The wire then ceased working, and no further information could be obtained.

In the course of the day several visitors called, and this telegram formed the chief subject of conversation. Most of the visitors disbelieved the story or considered it much exaggerated. It was thought that if a serious mutiny had occurred, the Government would have received the first information. My brother had gone after breakfast to Government House; he did not return till late in the afternoon, and he then appeared much discomposed, as if he had heard of or expected some calamity.

I had permission to remain two more days at Agra, but my brother's manner so impressed me that I resolved to return at once to Muttra. I thought it possible, if the news was true, that some of the mutineers might wander into my district and create a disturbance; anything more serious than this I did not contemplate. I

desired my servant to pack up my clothes, I sent for a party of bearers, and entering my palanquin after dinner I travelled all night, and reached home the next morning a little before daybreak. The following day A—— arrived with the children.

It was our custom in the hot season to dine early, and when the sun had set to take a drive; that evening we drove round the old parade ground. At the further end was a slight rise, just sufficient to afford a view over the river Jumna. The water was then low, and the river rolled in several branches; a herd of cattle were lazily crossing the one nearest us. By the roadside was a grove of trees, a little temple, and a well. A party of travellers were resting by it, and their camels browsing. The scene was simple and full of the repose of Eastern life. In the times that followed it often recurred to my memory. Indian twilight is but of short duration; when we reached home it was dark.

Immediately on my return from Agra I had sent off messengers in all directions to obtain news of the mutineers; none had arrived, nor beyond vague rumours had any confirmation of the telegram been received. I was beginning half to doubt its truth; my doubts were now dispelled in a manner I little anticipated. As I stepped from the carriage a letter was handed me: it had been left by a servant with a message that it was important. A lamp was burning in the hall, I went towards it, and saw by its light that the letter had inscribed upon it, in large characters, the word 'Urgent.' I opened it in haste; it was from a gentleman, one of the engineers on the railway then constructing to Delhi, and who resided about forty miles down the line towards that city. It was to inform me that a party of mutineers had attacked and burnt his house. He had been absent and

had escaped; he had sent on this letter to inform me and to warn me that he had heard that the main body of the mutineers were advancing towards Muttra. So soon as I had read the letter I sent round and summoned the other English. We decided to send away the ladies and children to Agra.

Of the rest of that night I retain but a dreamy recollection. I remember that till near midnight the other families came hurrying in, that there was much confusion, some terror, and that till the palanquin bearers arrived from the city, we sat awaiting them in my drawing room. It was a beautiful room, brightly lighted, gay with flowers. It was the last time I thus saw it, and so it remains impressed on my memory.

It was near daybreak before the party started. I sent with them an escort of horsemen, and, as a further protection, all the Englishmen whose duties did not compel them to remain in the station. In the course of the day I got intelligence from the north of the district that no mutineers had as yet entered it, but from the direction of Delhi could be heard the sound of heavy cannonading. About midnight I was awoke by the arrival of a messenger from Agra; he brought a letter from Mr. Colvin, who was then the Lieutenant-Governor. I went to my room to write an answer. As I was writing I heard through the open doors the tramp of horses; in a minute or two a servant entered and announced that an English gentleman had arrived and was dismounting at the entrance. Almost immediately after the gentleman entered; he was quite a young man, he was armed with sword and revolver, and wore twisted round his hat a large native turban—he looked very tired and exhausted. He informed me that he was the assistant to the magistrate of Goorgoan; the district

that lay between mine and Delhi. The mutineers, he added, had entered the district, and the country had risen in insurrection, and he was on his way to Agra to convey the information to the Government; his horse had knocked up, and he had ridden to my house to request the loan of another, as also one for his servant.

I sent for horses, and also for refreshment for my guest. While it was getting ready, he informed me of the particulars of the mutiny of the regiment at Meerut, and of the events that had followed their arrival at Delhi; how the native troops at Delhi had joined them, how they had marched down to the palace, placed the king on the throne, and massacred all the English and Christians they could lay hands on. While narrating the story, he had been much agitated. When I inquired the names of the victims he broke down altogether, for among them was his only sister, a young girl of eighteen, who had but a few months previously arrived in India.

When he had eaten and drank, I persuaded him to lie down and rest, for I thought him too tired to proceed, and I sent on his letters by a horseman of my own to Agra. A little after dawn he left me, and soon after came the magistrate of Goorgoan and his clerk; and succeeding them at short intervals came all the English and Christians residing along the road to Delhi. Some were accompanied by their wives, their sisters, and their children—these I sent on under escort to Agra—the remainder, some five-and-thirty, sat down with me to breakfast. When breakfast was over I left my guests and went to my own room, where my office people were assembled.

I had hitherto kept silence about the mutiny, so far at least as was possible, partly from fear of exciting alarm, partly lest if the news should prove false I might

appear ridiculous. There was now no longer any object in concealment. I told them what I had heard; they expressed great astonishment; but ere long I perceived from the remarks they let fall that they had heard it all before, and, indeed, as regarded what had occurred at Delhi that they were much better informed than I was. All regular work was suspended; when a few papers had been signed and some orders issued there remained nothing more to do. However, to while away the time, I continued to chat with them about the events at Delhi. They soon got so interested in the subject as partly to forget my presence. Their talk was all about the ceremonial of the palace, and how it would be revived. They speculated as to who would be the Grand Chamberlain, which of the chiefs of Rajpootana would guard the different gates, and who were the fifty-two Rajahs who would assemble to place the Emperor on the throne.

As I listened I realised, as I had never done before, the deep impression that the splendour of the ancient court had made on the popular imagination, how dear to them were its traditions, and how faithfully all unknown to us they had preserved them. There was something weird in the Mogul Empire thus starting into a sort of phantom life after the slumber of a hundred years.

The rest of the day passed wearily away, the rooms were darkened to exclude the glare; there was nothing to do, my guests got tired of chatting, one by one they lapsed into silence or fell asleep; the water splashed on the frames of scented grass, the punkahs swung monotonously to and fro. At length the light softened, and began to stream in nearly level through the chinks of the Venetian blinds; then the servants threw open the doors, we dined, and strolled out into the garden. A

messenger presently galloped in to inform me that Captain Nixon was approaching with the Bhurtpore army. About dusk the army arrived; Captain Nixon brought with him several officers whose presence still further swelled our party. But in India guests are easily accommodated—the heat made it pleasant to sleep out of doors. I had beds arranged in the verandah and on a terrace beyond; soon after nine all the party were slumbering on them, all but myself and a few others, who preferred to sit up till later, and watch the moonlight.

CHAPTER II.

THE ASSEMBLING OF THE ARMY.

BHURTPORE is a small independent State, adjoining Muttra on the west. The Rajah had died some four years previously to the occurrence of the events I am relating, and the English Government had assumed charge of the territory till the infant son he had left should come of age. The administration of the State was conducted by an English officer, Major Morrison, who had the title of Agent, and several assistants, of whom the chief was Captain Nixon. Captain Nixon had received early intelligence of the disturbances at Delhi, and had immediately proposed to the Government to make use of the Bhurtpore troops to aid in suppressing them. The proposal had been approved of, and he had been authorised to march the army to Delhi, taking Muttra by the way. From some oversight these orders had not been communicated to me, and I was in consequence unaware of Captain Nixon's approach till about an hour before he entered the station.

As it was supposed that the mutineers were marching down on us, Captain Nixon decided to suspend his advance and await their arrival on the other side of the city, where he proposed to place his troops in position and throw up entrenchments. The city itself was very capable of defence, for it was full of narrow lanes and

houses of solid stone. At Captain Nixon's suggestion I erected barricades at the principal entrances, I raised guards, and I adopted various other measures to enable the inhabitants to co-operate with the soldiers—measures to which I looked back with some amusement, when I became better acquainted with the feelings of the citizens and their fighting capabilities.

Soon after breakfast I received a visit from two brothers—the Seths ; they were wealthy bankers, and the persons of the greatest influence in the city. They came ostensibly to show me a letter they had received from their agent at Delhi, but the real object of their visit was to warn me against the Sepoy guard, whom they informed me intended to mutiny on the first opportunity, and carry off the treasure. They added that the guard would have mutinied the previous evening but for the unexpected arrival of Captain Nixon's troops.

We had then in the treasury over half a million of silver rupees, and about ten thousand pounds' worth of copper coins, and money no longer current. During the first two days after my return from Agra I had become doubtful of the fidelity of the guard, and I had in consequence requested permission to send the treasure in to Agra ; in anticipation of the permission I had caused the rupees to be packed in boxes, and had collected carts for their conveyance. On the departure of the Seths I sent off a mounted messenger to Agra, reiterating my suspicions of the guard, and renewing my request for permission to send in the treasure.

In the course of the day we received intelligence that our fears regarding the approach of the mutineers were groundless. They were fortifying themselves in Delhi, from whence, apparently, they had no intention of departing. On this Captain Nixon decided to continue

his march, and to join the English army, which was approaching Delhi from the north. Orders were issued to the troops to prepare to move the next morning, and the rest of the day was spent by us in getting ready to accompany them.

The march was to commence at dawn; long before that time we were dressed and assembled in the verandah. Half an hour had passed when Captain Nixon joined us, and in tone and manner expressive of much annoyance informed me that he feared our departure would have to be delayed; the pay of the soldiers, he said, was in arrears, and they declined to set out till they received it, which could not be till the arrival of the State treasurer, which, however, he shortly expected.

This revelation of the discipline of the army was rather startling; it confirmed certain disparaging observations respecting the force which the Seths had let fall during their visit the previous day. Before long a jingling of bells was heard, and a gay little cart drawn by two fine bullocks entered the garden, and trotted up the avenue. A servant presently came up and announced the arrival of the treasurer. The chiefs were summoned, a consultation followed; when it was concluded, Captain Nixon informed us that the difficulty about the pay had been arranged, and that in a few minutes the army would begin to march. The minutes were so protracted that we began to fear some fresh obstacle had been discovered, when at length a gun fired. The report was followed by a babel of sounds, neighing of horses, shouts of men, jingling of bells, and at intervals that unpleasant bubbling noise that vicious camels emit when being laden. The sounds presently grew fainter, there was a tramp of men and horses, and in a

cloud of dust the army filed past the garden wall. After the army followed a miscellaneous rabble that seemed to have no end.

When the troops had passed and were fairly ahead, we mounted our horses and followed. Captain Nixon and another officer took their seats with me in my carriage. Just as we were passing through the gates it occurred to Captain Nixon that it would be as well to inspect the guard before leaving the station. I accordingly told the coachman to drive along the road that led to the office. A troop of the Bhurtpore horse and two chiefs accompanied us. The office was a large one-storied building, consisting of a few immense rooms, and surrounded by a wide massive verandah. It had originally been a private house, and in the days when Muttra was a large cantonment it had been the residence of the general. There was a tradition that it had once been temporarily occupied by Lord Lake.

It stood in the midst of extensive grounds, dotted with fine trees, and laid out something in the style of an English park. The grounds were usually thronged with people, but as it was long before office hours, they were now empty. The only person we saw as we drove up the avenue was the sentry on guard, and he was lolling carelessly against one of the pillars of the verandah. On seeing our cavalcade approaching he started upright, gave a confused look towards us, and ran through an open door into one of the rooms. He reappeared immediately, followed by the whole guard. They leaped off the verandah, formed in double line across the road, levelled their muskets, and threatened to fire if we advanced another step.

For a few minutes there was the greatest confusion; our escort drew their swords and commenced to gallop

round to take the Sepoys in the rear. We called to them to return, but every instant expected a collision. I and Captain Nixon left the carriage and advanced to the men, and after a good deal of coaxing and persuasion we induced their native officer to come forward, and we then explained to him that we had come merely to inspect the guard, and had no intention of attacking them, as they appeared to fear. Eventually the officer ordered the guard to ground their arms, and allowed us to enter the office. We made a hurried inspection, and left it, thankful that we had avoided a catastrophe. All the while we had been talking to the officer the men had kept their muskets levelled and their fingers on the triggers. If one of the guns had accidentally gone off there certainly would have been an engagement.

Captain Nixon drove on to his camp. I returned home, for I had a good deal to arrange before leaving the station. In the course of the morning the native officer called to offer apologies for the misadventure of the morning. He repeated his assurances of the loyalty of himself and his soldiers, and declared with many asseverations that they raised their muskets only to protect their lives, being fully persuaded, on seeing the Bhurtpore cavalry, that they had come to attack and destroy them. How the guard came to be in the office and in uniform instead of in undress and in their huts, as they ought to have been, he did not explain, nor did I think it prudent to inquire. I treated him very politely, accepted his excuses, and as soon as he had left I sent an express to Agra, reported what had happened, and urged again my advice that the treasure should be sent in without further delay.

In the afternoon I drove out to the camp. I found it pitched on a large open plain, about two miles on the

other side of the city. By the side of the high road there was a small bungalow, erected for the accommodation of the road overseer. In it I found Captain Nixon and his officers assembled, and also all the rest of our party who were to accompany the force. The bungalow consisted of a single room and some closets. The room was small, the inmates many, the heat overwhelming. We were glad when the sun sank low enough to permit us to throw open the doors and sit outside on the plain and in the verandah. We dined at evening in the State tent, a fine double-poled one belonging to the Rajah. We were a large party, and, for that night at least, a cheerful one; for we were all full of anticipation of a triumphal march to Delhi, to be followed by the glory of assisting at its capture. Dinner over, we sat outside; some smoked, some chatted. At an early hour we retired to rest. Our beds were arranged under large canopies, open on all sides, and which are termed by the natives 'Shameanahs.'

We did not continue our march the next day, as all the cannon had not arrived; nor the day after, in consequence of the absence of the head chief, and without him the other chiefs declined to move. In the course of the afternoon of the third day this chief made his entry, and there being now no further reason for a delay, Captain Nixon proposed that we should resume our progress. The chiefs made no objection, and orders were issued that the army should march the next morning. At sunset Captain Nixon held a durbar. He had, indeed, held one every evening, but this being preparatory to the march, was to be of more than usual solemnity. All the chiefs attended, as also at Captain Nixon's request did we English, such of us at least as occupied positions of importance.

The durbar was held under an immense canopy erected in front of the State tent, carpets were spread beneath the canopy, and chairs arranged in a semi-circle. Captain Nixon took his seat in the centre, two men holding silver-handled fans stood behind him. The company seated themselves on either side, we English occupying the chairs to the right, the chiefs those on the left, taking their positions according to their rank.

The proceedings commenced by Captain Nixon addressing the chief next him, who was the one last arrived, and making inquiries after his health; for it seemed he had been ill. The chief replied, expressing his gratification at the interest Captain Nixon took in his welfare, and his regret that his illness should have put us to the inconvenience of the delay. An interchange of remarks about the heat of the weather, the news from Delhi, and other ordinary topics then ensued; and these disposed of, Captain Nixon addressed the chief next beyond, and afterwards each of the others in turn. A general conversation followed, in which the speakers were Captain Nixon and three or four of the chiefs of the highest rank, the others observing a respectful silence.

Being the highest English official, I threw in an occasional remark, as etiquette demanded, but I mostly occupied myself in watching the proceedings, which had for me all the interest of novelty. The chief who sat next to Captain Nixon, though thin and sallow from the effects of his late illness, had a countenance expressive of much character, which, together with his superior rank, accounted, perhaps, for his influence. His manners were polished and dignified, which was more than could be said of those of most of the rest. With a very few exceptions, they were a heavy-looking, uncouth set of men. If their countenances had any particular expres-

sion, it was that of sensuality. In looking at them I was struck with their resemblance to each other, and also to the pictures on the walls of the tombs at Goverdhun, representing their ancestors the courtiers of the ancient rajahs of Bhurtpore.

I found that the durbar was regarded as the most important part of the administration of the State, so much so that the army could not have been kept together had it ceased to be held. Nevertheless, nothing but the most ordinary topics were discussed, and the greater part of the proceedings consisted in the passing of compliments. After half-an-hour had been so spent, Captain Nixon informed the chiefs that the army would march before dawn the following morning, and requested them all to be ready with their troops. The assembly then broke up.

During the durbar an incident occurred that greatly amused us English. By some oversight, one chair too few had been placed on the side occupied by the chiefs. The two chiefs of the lowest rank had in consequence to place themselves on the same seat. The chair was small, they were fat, and did not appear to be over-friendly. During the whole ceremony each had to keep a vigilant watch, lest he should be shoved off by the other. Once or twice this accident nearly occurred. The one that Captain Nixon addressed was obliged by etiquette to lean forward as he replied. His companion took advantage of his doing so to get a little more room for himself. The annoyance of the other, his efforts to conceal it, and the difficulty he had in conversing with Captain Nixon, and at the same time maintaining his balance, all this formed a picture so ridiculous that we English had the greatest difficulty in restraining our laughter. But neither the other chiefs nor the native

spectators evinced by sign or look that they saw in the situation anything the least amusing. But this was the result of politeness, not at all from want of perception of the humorous; for the natives are more quick to notice absurdities and cleverer in afterwards describing them than are the majority of Englishmen.

For the exercise of their talents in this direction one of my native clerks had in the course of the afternoon afforded them a fine opportunity. He was a young man of the name of Bycunt, a Bengalee by birth, and attached to the English department of the office. From the day of his joining the camp he had been uneasy—the possibility of meeting the mutineers had filled him with apprehension. His terror at length increased to a degree that incapacitated him for work. On discovering this I gave him permission to return to the station. But then a fresh difficulty arose. Short as the distance was, he was afraid to traverse it alone. When told that he must then accompany the army his nerves altogether gave way. He threw himself on the ground, screamed, and, to excite compassion, shed an abundance of tears. Finally, I had to procure from Captain Nixon an escort of four soldiers to convey him to Muttra. I had heard much of the cowardice of the Bengalees, but till I witnessed Bycunt's behaviour I had never realised its extent.

CHAPTER III.

THE MARCH TO DELHI.

About two o'clock the next morning I was awoke by the sound of a bugle; I dressed, and went over to the bungalow, where I found Captain Nixon and some of our party already assembled. The rest soon dropped in: the servants brought tea; while we were drinking it the chiefs presented themselves, and reported that their men were ready. A second bugle sounded, and the chiefs took their departure. Presently a noise of rumbling and trampling came from the direction of the camp. Soon after another chief entered, and announced that the army had commenced its march. We waited till it had got well away, and then we entered our carriage and followed.

We had driven an hour and more, going only at a walk, when the day dawned, and we found ourselves proceeding along a straight road, bordered by avenues of trees, and running through a level plain, thickly dotted with groves and villages. We presently came up to the army, and I had for the first time an opportunity of well observing it. The army marched in several divisions, the spaces between were filled with carts and animals, and such a mob of camp followers as accompany only an Indian army. At the head of the force came a regiment of cavalry. It had originally belonged to our

army, but for some reason or other had been presented to the late Rajah. Neither men nor horses seemed to have benefited by the change of masters, the horses looked uncared for, the men very untidy; still they wore uniforms, rode in column, and maintained some vestiges of their former discipline.

After them, but separated by a long interval of carts and camp followers, followed the regular infantry. It consisted of no more than a single regiment of Sepoys. They were armed and clothed after the English fashion, but both weapons and uniforms were of a very antiquated type. The muskets had flint locks, and the dresses were of the pattern in use in our army about the commencement of the century. They consisted of a swallow-tail coat, shoes like slippers, and wonderful caps of black leather, very much resembling the foot of an elephant. If the men had trousers, they did not wear them, but in their place the native dhoty, which is a voluminous roll of cotton cloth twisted round the waist and loins. They marched badly—straggling and lounging; and were altogether—themselves and their uniforms—dirty and slovenly to the last degree.

Their appearance was quite in harmony with that of the artillery, which, after another interval of mob and animals, next succeeded. No two of the guns were of the same size, and their carriages were as dilapidated as they could be to hold together. The wheels of two of them were absolutely falling to pieces, and only prevented from doing so by bands of rope coiled round the tyres. Some of the carriages were of bare wood; the others had once been painted, but so long ago that the traces of the paint were fast disappearing. In places it had fallen off in large flakes; where it remained it was discoloured and blistered. The only respectable cannon

were two nine-pounders belonging to the Seths. The eldest Seth had a few years previously been permitted to purchase these from our Government, in order to fire salutes to his idol. Very unwillingly, his younger brothers had permitted the guns to accompany our expedition.

After the artillery came what was considered as the irregular portion of the army. It consisted of some thousand and more of horse and foot. But the soldiers were so mixed up with the camp followers, and so little differed from them in appearance, that it was difficult to form any but the roughest estimate of their numbers. Some were armed with swords, some with matchlocks, others carried spears of solid steel very like kitchen spits.

This portion of the army was composed of several divisions, each being under the command of a separate chief. But in the line of march the distinction of division was not attended to, or else, since we set out, it had been lost—the whole force, horse, foot, soldiers and camp followers moved along in one confused, disorderly mass. The chiefs themselves took matters very easily; some rode in carriages, some on elephants, while others were carried reclining in palanquins. A few of the more energetic were mounted on horses, but neither these nor any of the others rode with their men.

It took us more than an hour to pass the army; soon afterwards we reached our encamping ground, which was a bare open space adjoining a village named Chowmah. There was here a small bungalow, which we were very glad to enter; for the sun was now high, its rays burning hot, and we were besides almost smothered with the dust. In the course of the day the army straggled in; when we took our evening stroll the plain

was covered by a canvas town; very pretty it looked, for the tents were bright in colour and picturesque in shape. When viewed nearer the impression was less pleasing. The camp was pitched without any arrangement, and full of noise, dirt, and disorder. Having commenced our march, we were anxious to continue it, and, indeed, Chowmah was not a place where anyone would willingly remain who could avoid doing so. Nevertheless, circumstances compelled us to reside in it for three whole days.

Captain Nixon was summoned to Agra to discuss the campaign with the Lieutenant-Governor, and the chiefs, on hearing of his intended departure, at once made it a plea for declining to continue the march. With much trouble and an exercise of patience that moved my admiration, Captain Nixon succeeded in inducing them to consent to proceed to the next halting place, and there await his return. I received hints from my own people that though the chiefs had given this promise they did not intend to abide by it. Their sincerity was not, however, put to the test.

I was woke up at midnight by a messenger from my police over the river. The messenger had brought a letter informing me that the Sepoy regiment at Allyghur, the next station to mine, had mutinied and gone to Delhi, having first burnt the English houses. I aroused the officer that Captain Nixon had left in charge of the army. He agreed with me that when the chiefs heard the news they would refuse to proceed. We thought it best to anticipate their refusal by countermanding the order for the march. This order, which was issued to prevent a disturbance, very nearly produced one. I received next morning a message from the chiefs that their choice lay between the army dying of thirst or

their marching it back to Bhurtpore, for all the wells in the neighbourhood had run dry. The statement seemed incredible; on making inquiry, I found it was untrue. There was plenty of water, but the troops were too lazy to draw it; they wished the villagers to do so for them, which the villagers refused. It took me all the morning to arrange the matter.

In the afternoon the Rajah's band played at the durbar. The band had been all along in the camp, but till now had not put in an appearance. The bandsmen played on English instruments, and what were supposed to be English tunes, though to our ears little resembling them. I suppose on that account they better suited the native taste. As the music played the camp followers clustered around; the sounds even drew the villagers from the sullen seclusion they had hitherto maintained. First one head, then another peeped cautiously over the village wall. Before long, the roofs of the houses were thronged with an admiring audience of men, women, and even children. In the course of the night Captain Nixon returned.

The next morning our party was augmented by the arrival of Mr. Harvey, the Commissioner of Agra, and some other gentlemen, chiefly young engineers, who had preferred to join the expedition rather than remain idle at Agra, where, as elsewhere, all regular work was suspended. We had known for some days of Mr. Harvey's intention to accompany the force, as also ha the chiefs, and unfortunately they had got the impression that he would bring with him a regiment of English soldiers. When they found that he was accompanied by only some twelve gentlemen and a small party of native troopers, their disappointment was extreme, and their dissatisfaction was so openly expressed that it

occasioned Captain Nixon some uneasiness. It was not till after hours of talking, and an assurance that they would be immediately reinforced by the army of the Rajah of Ulwar, that they consented to proceed. I doubt if they would really have done so had not Captain Nixon's assurances been confirmed in the course of the afternoon by the arrival of the advanced guard of the Ulwar army.

The next morning we marched. After travelling some miles, the monotony of the landscape was broken by the appearance of what seemed a vast castle of red stone. It was not really a castle, but a fortified caravanserai, one of the many erected by the ancient Mogul sovereigns, and which at intervals of about fifteen miles formerly lined all the great roads of the empire. Around the caravanserai lay the little town of Chattah. We passed a dirty pond, and came on an open space covered with the bones of animals and other rubbish. In the middle of the space was a small bungalow; in this we put up. The army encamped on the plain beyond the town.

The impression I had formed of our army was not favourable; further acquaintance had not altered but rather increased it. The army appeared to have no head and no discipline. It was nominally under the command of Captain Nixon as representing the Rajah, but the real power lay with the chiefs. The positions of the chiefs to each other, to the army, and to the Rajah were very confusing. They were all more or less nearly connected with the Rajah and with each other by ties of relationship. They received from the Rajah salaries of varying amounts. They possessed in addition hereditary estates of their own, and held civil appointments besides their commands in the army. One was Chief Architect,

another Head of the Revenue, a third was Prime Minister, and so on. Their salaries and their offices were partly hereditary, partly dependent on the pleasure of the Rajah. There appeared the same intermixture with regard to their troops. Part of the army belonged to the State, part was composed of the personal followers of the chiefs.

In the public durbars the demeanour of the chiefs to each other was most amiable. They uttered only the politest of speeches, and each agreed to whatever the others asserted. Their ordinary relations were less harmonious; they were split up into factions, each spoke of the other little but evil, and all were full of envy and contention. The difference in their positions and salaries appeared to be the cause of much of this ill-feeling. Two or three were rich and influential, the rest possessed only very moderate means and little individual authority; they were, in consequence, discontented and envious of their more fortunate relations.

Captain Nixon could do nothing without the approval of the head chiefs; and these, either from politeness or necessity before giving their approval, made a point of obtaining that of their inferior brethren. Consequently, no order could be issued till hours had been wasted in talk and discussion. I had not been long in the camp before I discovered that, on whatever other points the chiefs were at variance, there was one on which they were all entirely united, and that was a dislike to the expedition, and a determination to give it all the opposition in their power.

In this they were unintentionally encouraged by the English agent of the State, Major Morrison. Major Morrison had from the first disapproved of the expedition, in which, as the event proved, he showed his

judgment. But having been undertaken, he should have done his best to make it successful. This he did not do, but, on the contrary, gave it all opposition. Captain Nixon remonstrated, and in the end Major Morrison was temporarily removed from the agency, Captain Nixon being appointed in his place. This occurred during our halt at Chowmah. My brother thought Major Morrison's removal very unjust, to me it seemed unavoidable. As regarded the expedition it did not prove beneficial—it merely intensified the opposition of the chiefs.

In the course of the day the rest of the Ulwar army arrived. It consisted of about 4,000 men, chiefly cavalry, and a legion of camp followers. The Ulwar army, like that of the Bhurtpore, was commanded by the chiefs. They all attended the afternoon durbar, which was really very brilliant. It was held under the great Shamcanah, which was erected before the State tents. The chiefs did not indeed don their jewels, but there were plenty of silver sticks, silver-handled fans, gay dresses, and curious arms; the whole formed a very pretty spectacle.

Our march the next morning was through a country so identical in its appearance with that we had already traversed, that we might have imagined we were retracing our footsteps. There was the same straight road, the same groves and mud villages, and the same circle of trees for ever apparently bounding the horizon. A mile or two before reaching our encamping ground we came on a small cluster of domes. They formed an ancient cemetery, one of those 'cities of the silent,' as the natives poetically term them, occasionally met with in Upper India, and which, standing solitary on the open plain, have an aspect at once picturesque and melancholy.

Our halting place was just beyond the little town of Kosee. We put up in the Customs bungalow, the army encamped near us on the plain.

Kosee was the limit of my district; when the army moved on the next morning I did not accompany it. My orders had been to march with the army to procure it supplies, and to make use of it if necessary for the repression of disturbances. When it passed beyond the limits of my jurisdiction my connection with it ceased.

CHAPTER IV.

RURAL DISTURBANCES.

THE army marched the next morning. Two young Customs' officers remained behind with me, and also a party of three hundred and fifty Bhurtpore infantry, under the command of a young chief named Ruggonath Sing, and who bore the title of 'captain.' At the earnest request of their owners, the two cannon of the Seths were allowed to remain with this detachment.

In the course of the afternoon Captain Ruggonath Sing paid me a visit. He was a short, puffy youth about twenty years of age, uncouth in manner, like most of his tribe; and also, as I soon discovered, at once cowardly and boastful. The usual compliments over, he commenced to pour forth his griefs. He was, he informed me, miserably uncomfortable, and the heat was almost more than he could endure. He was also, he added, dying for want of amusement. At home, he continued, he passed his time, when not asleep, in seeing Nautches. He had two Nautch girls of his own, and longed to get back to their society. Then, very abruptly, he asked my permission to do so.

I replied that I had no authority to allow him leave, and suggested that if he wanted employment he might find it in attacking some insurgent village, of which just about there were plenty. He fired up at the pro-

posal, and with infinite bombast said he would start at once to any I might name, burn the houses, and kill the inhabitants. But when I explained that as the villagers were armed and would fight the killing might not be all on one side, his ardour cooled, and he remarked that perhaps he had better remain where he was.

We then discussed military matters of which, notwithstanding his rank in the army, I found he was perfectly ignorant. Nevertheless he regarded himself as much better informed than his fellow chiefs, most of whom he spoke of with contempt as 'mere civilians.' He told me quite plainly that both he and they hated the expedition, and I inferred that they felt no love for Captain Nixon for having suggested it.

As I had nothing else to do, nor he either, we chatted a long time, and I obtained from him much information about the Bhurtpore State and its army. What he said of the army confirmed the impression which, from my own observation, I had formed of it, that it was a mere mob, badly armed, worse disciplined, and commanded by a set of chiefs at once ignorant, cowardly, and full of dissension among themselves. The Ulwar force was more efficient. The artillery was really good, and the cavalry, if they chose to fight, were capable of doing so. As these armies have been so often mentioned in my narrative, it may perhaps be not uninteresting to the reader to learn something of the country from whence they came.

The soil of Upper India diminishes in fertility as it tends to the West. Beyond the Jumna the vegetation becomes less luxuriant. Before many marches are completed the traveller finds himself in a region whose appearance is very much that of a desert. This region is Rajpootana, or 'the land of the Rajpoots,' the caste who chiefly inhabit it. It is about the size of Germany,

and stretches across the Continent of India from nearly the banks of the Jumna to those of the Indus. It contains many fertile tracts, but a good deal of its surface is absolutely sterile.

Difficult of access, it was never more than nominally subjugated by the Mohammedan invaders. The chiefs, indeed, yielded a sort of allegiance to the Emperor: they assembled to place him on the throne, with one exception they gave him their daughters in marriage, and they took it in turn to guard the gates of the palace, though nothing would induce them to reside within its walls. But they paid little, if any, revenue, and they permitted no interference in the internal administration of their territories.

On our conquest of Delhi in 1803, the chiefs transferred this allegiance, such as it was, to us, as the successors of the Mogul sovereigns. Before many years had passed, what had been a nominal supremacy was converted into a very real one. The chiefs were allowed to maintain armies and to govern their own dominions; but the number of their troops was strictly limited, and they were made to conduct their government very much in accordance with our ideas of what a government should be. At all the principal courts English officers were appointed, under the title of Agents, to see and report that the chiefs carried out our instructions.

The State of Bhurtpore, though for the purposes of administration it was included among those of Rajpootana, did not properly belong to them. The inhabitants were of an inferior caste, and the Rajah, in place of claiming descent, as do the Rajpoot princes, from the sun and the moon, could boast no more illustrious ancestors than the leaders of a band of thieves. It was one of these leaders who, about the reign of our Charles II., was fortunate enough to plunder the baggage of the army of

the Emperor Alumgire, when that monarch set out from Agra on his ill-starred expedition to the Deccan. With the treasure thus obtained the Rajah of the Jâts, as the leader of the band was then styled, erected the Fort of Bhurtpore.

Secure in this stronghold, which against native troops was impregnable, he and his successors became ere long a name and a power in Upper India. Their power culminated in the person of their great chieftain, the Rajah Sooruj Mull, generally known as the 'Jât.' Sooruj Mull conquered Agra, threatened Delhi, and constructed a kingdom out of other portions of the Mogul Empire, which had by this time fallen to pieces. After the death of Sooruj Mull the fortunes of the State began to decline. They were driven out of Agra by the Mahrattas, and after sinking to the rank of a petty sovereignty their capital, Bhurtpore, was taken by us in the year 1826. The State was not annexed, but its territories were reduced to their present dimensions, which did not much exceed those of the Muttra district.

The State of Ulwar was one of the real States of Rajpootana, though its sovereign did not hold the first rank among the Rajpoot chieftains. The present Rajah was, like the Rajah of Bhurtpore, a minor, and his territories were also, like those of Bhurtpore, under charge of an English officer till such time as he should attain his majority. It was by the orders of this officer that the army of the State had arrived to join our expedition.

After this digression I will return to Ruggonath Sing. Before taking his leave, he renewed his entreaties to be allowed to return to his Nautch girls. Satisfied at last that I had no power to permit him, he requested me to render his condition a little more endurable by lending him one of my tents. Much to my subsequent regret, I

was good-natured enough to do so. He departed full of expressions of gratitude, the sincerity of which his after-conduct sufficiently displayed.

I remained at Kosee for several days. My principal employment was the keeping open the communications, for as the news spread of the events at Delhi the country became very disturbed. To explain the causes of the disturbances I must make another digression, and say a few words on our Revenue system.

According to the Hindoo theory the nation constitutes a family, of which the king and queen are the parents and the land the common inheritance. Possibly at one time the facts may have coincided with the theory. At the date of our conquest of Bengal they had ceased to do so. The land was held by tenures, which to the English of that day appeared to be feudal, just as the native architecture seemed to them to be Gothic. And it must be admitted that in both cases there was a certain superficial resemblance. The buildings had pointed arches, and the soil was distributed amongst large proprietors holding direct from the sovereign, with a succession of smaller proprietors holding from them. On a better acquaintance, it was perceived that the resemblance was merely accidental; the principle of the tenures was essentially different.

The soil of the country was the estate of the sovereign. The persons whom we regarded as proprietors were not such in the English sense of the word; their position was more that of hereditary tenants. But this position we converted into one of ownership, subject to the payment of a fixed revenue not liable to enhancement. It was subsequently discovered that the cultivators also possessed certain rights in the soil, of which this arrangement had in a great measure deprived them. When, later

on, the revenue system of the upper provinces was revised, it was determined to avoid this error. Meanwhile a new theory of the land tenure had been adopted. By this theory the proprietorship of the soil was considered to vest in the cultivators, and the so-called proprietors to be merely agents through whom the rents of the cultivators were paid to the sovereign.

The proprietors were of two classes: the Zemindars, or owners of villages, and the Talookdars, or owners of groups of villages. The Talookdars did not everywhere exist; where they did the Zemindars held from them. This arrangement was now regarded as superfluous. In lieu of their revenues, the Talookdars were ordained to receive allowances of money, which, by a subsequent order, were declared to be terminable on the decease of the present recipients. Of their other rights they were deprived. The act was one of confiscation. Without any fault, the Talookdars were reduced from the position of nobles and princes to that of mere life-pensioners. By a stroke of the pen they were deprived of estates which their ancestors had, in many cases, held for ages.

The Zemindars were allowed to continue: they could not have been conveniently done away with. But they were reduced to very nearly the condition which they were supposed by the then accepted theory to have originally occupied, namely, that of mere agents for the collection of the village rental.

In fixing the amount of the village rentals, the Government had laid down a very just principle for the guidance of the officers entrusted with the duty. The rental was to be fixed at such an amount that the Zemindar should derive a fair income in average seasons, while the extra profits of the good seasons should be sufficient to balance the losses on the bad seasons.

The directions issued at that time to the revenue officers teem with exhortations for attendance to this principle. Nevertheless it was discovered that a too implicit obedience to these instructions had a tendency to retard promotion. The settlement of the revenue was entrusted to young officers whose careers were before them. It is not surprising that it was fixed at an amount which the Zemindars were not long able to pay. In good seasons they made little, in bad seasons they were ruined.

The native governments collected their revenues by seizing the standing crops. They also compelled payment by other methods, which were, to our ideas, equally cumbersome, wasteful, and cruel. For these methods we substituted the simple expedient of selling the estates of the defaulters.

In the native opinion, rights in land were invested with a degree of sanctity; their laws gave expression to this sentiment. A man could not be deprived of his inheritance for debts due either to the State or to individuals. Mortgages were not unfrequent, but permanent alienations were unknown. Under our rule this was changed; land was made liable to sale in the same manner as other property. The effect of this alteration was that, in the course of a generation, the greater portion of the soil had changed owners. The ancient proprietors had given place to new men, mostly strangers, often Bunniahs. The Bunniahs were a class peculiar to India, impossible elsewhere. They were the hereditary traders and bankers, and in consequence of the system of caste possessed a monopoly in both occupations.

The rural Bunniah was at once grocer and corn-dealer, and supplier of such other commodities as the simple habits of the villagers created a demand for. He was also the money-lender, making advances to the cul-

tivators for the purchase of their seed and agricultural implements, for their marriage expenses, and for the payment of their rents and revenue. From the Zemindar downwards the whole village was usually in his debt, and of all creditors he was the most pitiless.

Under the native rule his exactions were somewhat restrained; the land of his debtors was beyond his reach, and if his extortions exceeded a certain limit he ran the risk of assassination. The result of our government was to remove these restraints; the law gave the Bunniah protection, it also gave him the land as a security for his claims, and—what it is sad to acknowledge—by its cumbrous procedure, by its delays, and by its expensiveness, it gave him the means for fabricating these claims. So great were the facilities it afforded in this way, that forged documents and false witnesses became almost as much part of the stock in trade of a successful Bunniah, as his account books or his commodities.

The old proprietors belonged to the village; the cultivators were men of their own caste, often their relations. They loved their land for itself, independent of the rent it afforded them. The feeling of the new proprietors was different—they cared nothing for the land, they desired only to get a profit out of their investment. Being withheld by no considerations of sentiment, they succeeded in extracting a rental where their predecessors had failed to do so, and for a time in also paying the Government revenue, but not for long. Eventually they too became defaulters, and the Government, convinced at length that its demand was excessive, reluctantly lowered it.

Our settlement of the revenue had been cruel to the Talookdars—it had been oppressive towards the Zemindars; but, notwithstanding its severity, it had greatly

benefited the country at large, especially the cultivators of the soil, who had obtained security of tenure and freedom from arbitrary exactions. The improvement in the condition of the peasantry had been followed as a natural consequence by an increase in the cultivation. Almost all the waste lands, formerly extensive, had been brought under the plough. There were few portions of the soil capable of producing a crop that did not now yield one.

The patriarchal authority of the Zemindars had been often cruelly abused—nevertheless, its abolition was not an unmixed good; with it had departed much of that kindly feeling in which it had its origin, and also the bond by which, in times when the authority of the Government was suspended, order had been maintained. Till the breaking out of the mutiny this result had not been perceived, or, if perceived, had been disregarded, for the collapse of our rule was an event not anticipated; it now displayed itself.

When the news spread that the King of Delhi was again seated on his throne, the villagers imagined that our dominion had ceased. The law had no longer terrors, every man who was strong enough commenced to do that which was right in his own eyes. The first proceedings everywhere were to take revenge on the Bunniahs; their houses were plundered, their account books burnt, themselves and their families often much maltreated. The villagers next commenced to fight among themselves; all who had wrongs, if they could, avenged them. The new Zemindars when strangers were everywhere ejected; if they belonged to the village they had to maintain their position by a struggle with the ancient proprietors, who now by force of arms sought to recover their inheritance. Between many villages there existed hereditary feuds; in

some villages there were similar feuds between the different clans composing the population. These feuds, after slumbering for half a century, were now revived and fought out.

Three weeks had hardly elapsed since the commencement of the mutiny, but in that short period a large portion of the district had lapsed into anarchy. Order was only maintained in the towns, and in those few portions of the country where the ancient proprietors still held possession of their villages.

After leaving Kosee, the Bhurtpore and Ulwar armies had marched on one stage to a village named 'Hodul,' and there they had since remained. The chiefs did not openly say that they would go no further, but each day they found some fresh excuse for not doing so. The time had now arrived when the guard was to be relieved at Muttra, which it usually was at the expiration of every second month. In consequence of my report of the misconduct of the present guard, one of their English officers had been sent to take charge of them; the officer selected was a young lieutenant of the name of Burlton—he was at present a guest in my house.

I had repeatedly warned the Government that the guard would probably mutiny so soon as it was reinforced by the relieving company, and I had recommended that the temptation to do so should be removed by previously sending the treasure into Agra. To these warnings and to this recommendation no attention had been paid. The Government expressed themselves convinced of the loyalty of the Sepoys, and treated my apprehensions as groundless alarms.

CHAPTER V.

THE MUTINY OF THE GUARD.

THE day the new guard was to arrive I had driven over to Chattah, the small town in which was that magnificent caravanserai I have already mentioned. I put up in the bungalow, intending to proceed to Muttra the next morning. It was about nine o'clock and I was going to bed, having to start early, when a servant ran in. In a hurried manner he announced that some English gentlemen were approaching the house. As he spoke I heard the tramp of horses, and immediately after, my two assistants, one of whom was a son of Mr. Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor, entered the room; they were followed by Mr. Joyce, my head-clerk, and a young man whom I did not know, but who was introduced to me as Lieutenant Gibbon.

All the party looked hot and tired, and Mr. Gibbon seemed in pain; he was bareheaded, and had one hand swathed in a bandage. In answer to my look of surprise young Mr. Colvin informed me that the guard had mutinied, and he and his companions had had to run for their lives. He said they were very thirsty, and asked for tea; while it was being made I heard their story. It was as follows:—

The new guard had marched in that morning under the command of Mr. Gibbon; the old guard was to

return to Agra with the treasure so soon as it was ready. The making over the treasure was always a long business. To expedite it, my assistants had gone early to the office, and there breakfasted in company with Mr. Burlton and Mr. Gibbon; breakfast over, they returned to the treasury, leaving their guns piled in a corner of the room in which they had had the meal. The rupees had been counted, packed, and the other formalities completed. It was then about one o'clock in the afternoon. The treasure carts being reported laden, Mr. Burlton wished the others good-bye, and went out to join his men.

He had not been gone more than a minute or two when the sound of a shot was heard; it was followed by a rush of Sepoys into the office. What happened next none of the party could exactly remember; they ran for their guns but found them gone. The breakfast-room opened into another and a larger room; into this they fled, the Sepoys following and firing at them. They heard the bullets strike the walls, but none hit them. The windows of the room happened fortunately to be open; they rushed through them, jumped off the verandah, and ran for their lives across the office grounds to a garden full of trees that lay beyond.

The Sepoys followed them part of the way firing all the while, but being armed with the old heavy musket and not very good marksmen their bullets went wide. In the garden the party collected. It consisted of Mr. Colvin, his fellow-assistant, Mr. Dashwood, Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Joyce, and two of the under-clerks, named Hashman. All had escaped injury except Mr. Gibbon, who had received a bayonet thrust in his left hand.

The garden was situated on the river; they descended the bank, and made their way along the shore to the city.

Arrived there, they ran through the streets to the chief police station.

The head of the police was asleep. With some difficulty he was aroused; on hearing their story he appeared quite confounded, and either unable or unwilling to afford them any assistance. They succeeded, however, in inducing him to procure them the horses on which they had ridden out to Chattah, where they learnt I was. In the flight from the office Mr. Gibbon had lost his hat; in addition to the pain of his wound he had consequently endured the heat of the terrible Indian sun bareheaded. What had become of the two clerks they did not know, they had lost sight of them somewhere along the river bank. Of Mr. Burlton's fate they were also ignorant, but feared the worst.

It took me some time to hear their story, for I had many questions to ask before I quite understood it. I immediately sent off a horseman to Agra to inform the Government, desiring him to proceed by a circuitous route to avoid the mutineers. This done, I ordered my carriage and riding horses to be in readiness should we require them to convey us to the Bhurtpore army. I sent scouts along the road to ascertain if the Sepoys were approaching, and I despatched a message to warn Captain Nixon.

While these arrangements were being made, my visitors had had their tea and fallen asleep, all but Mr. Gibbon, whose wound had become very painful. It was now past midnight; on account of the heat Mr. Gibbon and I left the bungalow and sat by the side of the road, which ran just in front; the others in a little while awoke and joined us. Before we had sat long, I had an impression that there were people near us, and as my eyes got accustomed to the darkness I perceived, not altogether

to my satisfaction, that all the men of the village had flocked down and were standing before and around us; but so perfectly still and silent were they, that neither by whisper nor movement had I been aware of their presence. The sight of this crowd made me conjecture that the news of the mutiny of the guard had got abroad, and also made me a little anxious as to what the effect of the news on the country would be.

When the villagers saw that I perceived them, their head men came forward, made some respectful salutations, and informed me that they had assembled to express their loyalty to the Government; they added that if I would allow them, they would give proof of their attachment to our rule by defending the caravanserai should the mutineer Sepoys advance to attack it. Their professions of loyalty were so vehement, and apparently so genuine, that for all my experience I was induced to put credit in them. I committed the caravanserai to their care. It just then contained the Government records and treasure of that division of the district, and also horses and other property of my own.

While this conversation was going on, I noticed a man standing near me armed with one of those odd-looking spears of solid steel, and learnt to my surprise that the man was none other than my Bengalee clerk, Baboo Bycunt, whose cowardice at the commencement of the march had occasioned me so much trouble. The rebel army not coming down from Delhi, he had got over his apprehensions and rejoined my camp, and was now, I was told, become so valiant as to contemplate fighting, and had procured the weapon that had attracted my attention.

The Baboo's valour was being extolled in terms that showed it was not much believed in, when I felt someone touch me on my shoulder, and turning my head per-

ceived the chief of my horsemen. As I turned, he stooped and whispered that he had something important to tell me, and wished to do so in private; having said this he retired. I made some excuse to the natives about me, rose and followed him. When we were out of hearing he stopped, looked carefully round to see that no one was near, and then informed me that the scouts had returned, and reported that the mutineers were advancing in our direction, and were now halting in a village not much more than five miles distant, and that they would probably resume their march in an hour or two. I sent for the scouts and examined them; they assured me that they had actually seen the mutineers, and I saw no ground for disbelieving them.

I rejoined my companions and told them that we must start at once; there was time to escape, none to delay. All the preparations had been long made, our horses were standing ready saddled, my carriage drawn up and my escort behind it. We mounted our horses, I put my servants and my little dog into the carriage, and we set off. The heads of the village accompanied us as far as the houses extended; they then took their leave, uttering many prayers for our safety, and mingling them with vows and protestations that they would defend the caravanserai to the last.

Just before starting, the head of my horsemen had asked me if we were really going to the Bhurtpore camp. When I informed him that we were, he endeavoured to dissuade me; he said that everyone knew that the chiefs were in league with the Sepoys. 'If they were not,' he continued, 'is it likely the Sepoys would be coming this way?' The question made me reflect. It certainly appeared improbable that two hundred men would march to meet five thousand unless they had come to some

understanding. However, I considered we were bound in honour to join Captain Nixon, and in this opinion the others had coincided.

We had ridden some two hours or more, when we saw before us a bright light; on coming nearer, the light resolved into several smaller lights, which appeared to be torches, and we could presently perceive figures moving among them. They proved to be the chief Revenue officer of Kosee, and his attendants. They had heard of our approach, and had come outside the town to await our arrival. I interchanged a few words with the chief officer, and while doing so I remembered that my friend Captain Ruggonath Sing was encamped close by. I sent a message that I should be glad to see him. His answer rather confirmed the warnings of my horsemen regarding the fidelity of the Bhurtpore troops. Ruggonath Sing would neither come to me, nor admit me into his camp, nor give up the guns. After a quarter of an hour spent in unsuccessful parleying, I thought it best to leave him, and we rode on.

Riding by night at a walking pace is very tiring; we were glad when the day broke, still more pleased when we reached Captain Nixon's camp. We found Captain Nixon and his officers seated, drinking tea under the great awning. Captain Nixon rose as we approached, ordered us chairs, and desired the servants to hand us tea. While we were drinking it, we related in detail the events that had occurred at Muttra, and the approach of the mutineers. On this last matter I found Captain Nixon a little incredulous. However, after examining my horsemen, and consulting the chiefs, he agreed to send off a party of troopers along the road to get intelligence; an English officer commanded the party, and one of the chiefs accompanied it.

This done, Captain Nixon rose, and we all left the awning. Some went to their tents, some of us to a small bungalow near which the camp was pitched. Here we discussed again the position. We came to the conclusion that the army was not to be trusted, and that before long we might have to leave it. For this contingency we set about making preparations. I collected my servants and escort, had their horses and my own fed and watered, and procured from the town ready-cooked food for the men. I also got long native purses, which we filled with rupees and tied round our waists; and we then stuffed our pockets full of biscuits. I had my carriage drawn up under a tree near the bungalow, and the horses, ready saddled, tethered beside it. I gave my men strict injunctions not to stray from the spot, that, in case we had suddenly to fly, I might know where to find them. Meanwhile, the other Englishmen had been looking to their arms, and one or two, who knew how, had made cartridges, which were distributed among the party.

By the time these preparations were completed we were summoned to breakfast, which was served in the great tent. During the meal many speculations were hazarded as to how events would turn out. Captain Nixon expressed his confidence in the chiefs, and his belief that all would go well. Most of the party held a contrary opinion. The discussion was becoming warm, when a servant entered bearing a note, which he delivered to Captain Nixon. Captain Nixon opened and read it; as he did so his countenance fell. He passed the note to an officer beside him, who communicated its contents. It was from the officer who had gone to get intelligence: he reported that the Sepoys were within a mile of Kosee, and that Ruggonath Sing and his men were in open mutiny.

For a minute or two there was silence, then Captain Nixon rose, repeated his assurances of the loyalty of the chiefs, and left the tent to consult them. We returned to the bungalow, where in a short time we were joined by nearly all the other English in the camp. The servants followed their masters, and a mob of camp followers and vagabonds from the town of Hodul gradually collected. Some came from curiosity, many I fancy with the hope of plunder. Before long the bungalow was surrounded by a great assembly of men and animals, the combined noises of which were very confusing.

We remained in the bungalow for over an hour, the crowd outside constantly increasing, and also its clamour. At the end of that time Captain Nixon was seen approaching. He entered the bungalow, and in a few words informed us that the army had mutinied, and that we must leave it. We had been all the while expecting this announcement, but now that it came it appeared to take everyone by surprise. There was a rush outside, shouts for grooms and horses; for a few minutes the wildest confusion. The confusion was increased by a report—I do not know by whom spread—that the Ulwar Horse were about to charge us. The report had the good effect of ridding us of the crowd. They fled precipitately, leaving the space clear for ourselves and our servants.

Now that the crowd had gone, we could the better realise our position, and it was certainly sufficiently perilous. Including our escorts, we numbered about seventy-five persons, of which nearly half were natives. The army before us amounted to above five thousand men, including a large force of cavalry, and much artillery. If it attacked us we could entertain but small hope of escape; whether it would do so we were all uncertain, and therefore very anxious to get away. Captain Nixon,

however, desired us to remain while he made a last appeal to the chiefs. In the meantime our party collected their horses, had them saddled, and brought up to the bungalow, where we awaited Captain Nixon's return. All these preparations I had made beforehand. I now sent away my carriage and servants, and to their care I committed my little dog. I seated them in the carriage, told them to get into some bye-lane if they could, and, if they met the mutineer Sepoys to pass themselves off as the suite of a Molwye from Delhi. Natives then occasionally used English carriages, and my head-servant, having a gray beard and venerable appearance, might easily pass for the Molwye himself. These instructions given, the coachman jerked his reins, the horses broke into a trot, and the carriage rolled away, my little dog looking wistfully towards me from under the servant's shawl.

Captain Nixon was long in returning. We got tired of waiting, and very impatient to be off. We mounted our horses, and collected together on the plain. The camp lay stretched before us in a long line—in so long a line that if the ends advanced they would enclose us. It was past noon, the sun stood nearly vertical above us, a small disc, in a sky faintly blue. There was no wind, and the air felt like heated sand.

We stood thus for nearly a quarter of an hour, when Captain Nixon returned. He told us that his appeal to the chiefs had failed, and that we must leave. It was about time that we did, for the Ulwar cavalry had begun to mount their horses, and their artillerymen had turned their guns in our direction, and a message came from them that if we delayed much longer they would open fire. On this we moved off a short distance, then we halted while Mr. Harvey and Captain Nixon consulted as to where they would proceed. They decided to make for

our army before Delhi by the direct route if they could; if not, to cross the river Jumna and get round by Meerut.

I thought the decision an unwise one, for I felt pretty sure that they would not succeed in reaching Delhi, or even Meerut. I pointed out these objections, and proposed that instead they should accompany me to Muttra, where, with Mr. Harvey's permission, I was returning to resume my charge of the city and district. However, they held to their determination, and we wished good-bye. Mr. Joyce and I turned our horses, and, accompanied by our escort, cantered off to the south. Mr. Harvey and the rest of the party moved away in the other direction, their troopers following them, and also, towering high above the horsemen, the two elephants.

CHAPTER VI.

FLIGHT TO AGRA.

One of our men rode in front to lead the way, Mr. Joyce and I came next, the remaining three-and-twenty of our horsemen followed in a long irregular line. We bore away to the left till we were out of sight of the camp, then we made a circuit across the Delhi road, and directed our course to the south-west. After we had ridden a mile or two we pulled up to breathe our horses. Happening to turn my head, I saw a party of cavalry, apparently following us. On this we cantered on again, a high bank presently put us out of sight. When we got beyond it, we perceived to our satisfaction that they had altered their course, and were proceeding in the direction of the camp.

We had now come to an open plain, slightly raised above the surrounding country; and, looking around, we noticed a tall column of smoke rising from beyond the horizon behind us. Our men suggested that it was the smoke of the bungalow, where we had passed the morning, and which the Sepoys had probably set on fire. After riding for some miles or so along the plain, the lane had become a mere track, often not easily distinguishable. Soon the track became confused with other tracks, and our men had often some doubts which of the many was the one we ought to follow.

We had now, we thought, got beyond fear of pursuit, and our apprehensions removed, I began to find something rather exhilarating in our position. It was such a pleasant change from our usual confinement indoors to be in the open air, and riding over the country at the head of a band of horsemen seemed like acting a part in a fairy tale. All possible adventures might be before us. Mr. Joyce, who knew the natives much better than I did, did not at all share in my pleasurable anticipations. On the contrary, he expressed his belief that our adventures might end very unpleasantly. Quite unconsciously our men presently intimated the same opinion.

The tracks had become so confused that our men were at fault. They halted and held a consultation, which ended by their selecting two of their number to ride before and act as guides. The two men advanced, picked out a track, and as we proceeded along it they began to sing their own praises, and to proclaim their competence to direct the way, in a series of interrogatories addressed to each other. 'Brother,' one of them commenced, 'do we not know the country, when to turn to the right and when to the left, which villages we should enter, and which it would be wise to avoid?' These last words aroused my curiosity. I inquired what they meant by saying that some villages were to be avoided. The men replied with great circumlocution, informing me that in the same manner as the Almighty had created animals of all species, so had He endowed human beings with an infinite variety of dispositions; some were peaceable and submissive to authority, others, when the restraint of the law was removed, 'stretched their necks,' and were defiant to their superiors. In conclusion, they gave me to understand that there were some villages that we had much better leave at a distance.

In pursuance of this advice we kept as much as possible to the bye-lanes, and if they led past a village we rode over the fields so as not too nearly to approach it. Those that we were obliged to ride near we noticed were full of men, mostly armed with clubs and spears. They clustered in groups and gazed at us over the walls very defiantly. If the villages were full the country was empty. We had ridden for miles and not seen a single man abroad in the fields. The circumstance struck our men, who began to remark on it. It made us a little uneasy, for it seemed to indicate that some disturbances were expected.

We continued our ride for many hours, always keeping to the south-west; when the ground was hard cantering our horses, but for the most part walking them. At length the day began to decline, the rays of the sun slanted from the west, and presently the flat monotony of the plain was broken by the appearance of a small hill above the horizon. At the same time we approached a large village, straight through which the road ran. As ill-luck would have it, in the middle of the village Mr. Joyce's horse stumbled and fell, and in the fall threw Mr. Joyce and broke one of the saddle girths. Mr. Joyce was a good deal shaken, but not otherwise hurt. He would have mounted again immediately, only it was necessary to mend the girth, and this took some time; meanwhile, the men of the village began to crowd round us. They were rude in their manner, and as they were all armed with clubs or spears we were much afraid that they would attack us. We felt thankful when the girth was patched together, and we had ridden out of the village. We had not got far outside it when we heard shouting, and looking back, we saw a large crowd running after us. We put our horses to a canter, and continued at that pace till we had left the village well behind us.

The hill, as we rode on, had been continually rising above the horizon; we had now approached sufficiently near to perceive that its sides and summit were crowded with buildings which had the appearance of the walls and towers of a castle. They are in reality only those of a temple. Our guides now turned to the left, and we presently came to a small wood, which bears the pretty name of 'The Forest of the Wild Dove.' In the wood was a small lake, and thither we now advanced to water our horses. I had once visited the place before, during the cold season, and had been struck by its picturesque beauty. On a small promontory which ran into the lake there stood a little temple, and by it a hermitage, where resided a Brahmin. Temple and hermitage were reflected in the calm surface of the lake, then glowing with the tints of sunset.

Seen now, in the hot season and in broad daylight, the spot was less attractive. The water had vanished; in its place was an expanse of black mud, scored in every direction by cracks and blisters. The trees on the bank added to the dreariness of the scene. They were of a kind termed 'Kuddum,' which flourish only in damp, unwholesome situations, and have an aspect of decay that would fit them for the margin of the Styx.

As we gazed disconsolately on the muddy surface, one of the men suggested that we might find water at the further end of the lake, which was deeper. The suggestion proved correct. We rode on and came to a small bay, where the lake, though much shrunk, was not entirely dried. The water was thick and turbid, but did not on that account appear the less acceptable to our horses. They rushed eagerly into it, buried their noses beneath the surface, and drank with an avidity that showed the thirst they had endured.

On issuing from the wood we met a man driving a herd of buffaloes; he was the first man we had seen abroad since we commenced our journey. On catching sight of us he turned abruptly and ran off, shouting loudly as if to give warning to companions, who were out of sight. Soon after we came to a well; near it, and shaded by a fine tree, was a straw hut, so small and so neatly constructed as to suggest the idea of a doll's house. We halted, our men shouted; as they did so a window opened, and at it appeared the face of a Brahmin.

The water of the lake, though not objected to by our horses, had been too muddy for us to drink. We were excessively thirsty. On learning our wants the Brahmin handed us out water in little cups of red earth. We drank it with great enjoyment, for it was clear and tolerably cool, and we then inquired the news.

The Brahmin was simple and communicative, and readily told us all he knew, which, however, was not much nor particularly clear. He had heard from some travellers of the mutiny of the Sepoys at Muttra, and also some confused story that before leaving they had burnt the station. Our questions failed to elicit any reliable details, so I gave him a handful of copper coins, and we rode on, the Brahmin shouting blessings upon us for our unexpected liberality.

The track now led us past several villages. Before them mobs of men were collected; as we rode by they shouted and brandished their weapons. At the third village they ran after us, at the fourth they fired at us. The firing was answered from a village in advance—a further village replied to that. In a few minutes the whole country resounded with the noise of firearms. This behaviour of the villagers gave us some uneasiness; it appeared to have an effect also on our men. Their

manner became less respectful, and, what was more serious, they began to desert us.

To avoid the villages, which were now very numerous, we left the lane, and made our way across the fields. The fields were intersected by banks and watercourses, which it frequently took some time to get over. The delay made our progress slow. Also our horses were becoming tired, and once or twice we lost our way. It was dark before we reached the little town of Suhar.

It had been our intention here to strike to the east, and get again into the high road. But we learnt from some travellers that a troop of cavalry were patrolling that road, on the look-out, so they said, for the magistrate—that was me. This intelligence decided us to continue our course along the bye-lanes. The night was dark, and the lanes were bad riding; for they were either deep in sand or scored with ruts. Through these the horses had to pick their way, and not always successfully. At one place my horse stumbled; in the effort to recover him my belt broke. I saved the pistol, but the belt fell, and we could not delay to search for it. The loss vexed me, for it was of silver and very valuable.

Not long after the horse of one of the men came down altogether. The horse was not hurt, but the saddle was knocked to pieces. It was a native one, composed of a series of pads resting on a framework of wood. It took us many minutes to collect the pieces and fasten them together again.

Since those first shots had been discharged at us in the afternoon the firing had never quite ceased, though towards dusk the reports had become few and occasional. They now became more frequent; one village appeared to wake up another. The entire country was before long resounding with the reports of matchlocks,

mingled with the deeper boom of the 'gingals' and 'ramjunnies,' as those large wall pieces are termed. These relics of the troublesome times that preceded our rule were still possessed by some of the landowners. The noise was not agreeable in the daytime; heard by night, it was still less pleasant. It suggested the idea that we were surrounded on all sides by unseen enemies.

It must have been about nine o'clock when we approached the little town of Raal. The road ran through it, and the night was too dark for us to attempt to get round over the fields. That we might escape observation, our men proposed that we should disguise ourselves. We halted, and I and Mr. Joyce alighted, as did two of our horsemen. We each had 'pugrees' round our hats. These they twisted into turbans, and they tied cotton girdles round our waists. The turbans so well concealed our faces that in the dark they thought we might escape observation, for the wearing English coats and trousers was not uncommon among some classes of the natives.

Our men had remembered that the night was the festival of the Dusserah, and that the town would be full of people and the shops lighted. To keep me and Mr. Joyce from observation, they arranged that they should ride in close column, keeping us in the centre. If addressed, they would represent themselves as troopers from Bhurtpore, on their way to bathe in the Ganges.

This settled we advanced towards the town, and before long entered a narrow lane, which had low mud hovels on either side. After proceeding along it for some little way, the lane made a sudden turn. We entered the principal street, and found ourselves in a blaze of light. The shops were lit up by a profusion of little lamps, and from many of them proceeded the glow of fire from the ovens, over which the proprietors were cooking sweetmeats.

The street was full of people, chatting, walking about, and making purchases. All were wearing their gayest attire. It was but a homely little place in reality, but coming suddenly into it from the darkness it appeared very bright and cheerful.

Our cavalcade attracted a good deal of attention. The passers-by stopped and stared, and some of them made inquiries as to who we were and whither proceeding, to which our men answered, as had been arranged, that we were troopers from Bhurtpore proceeding to the Ganges to bathe; and though our men were many of them Mohammedans, they concluded their replies with the usual invocation to the sacred river, 'Glory to the Ganges, the holy Ganges!'

On leaving the street we plunged into a dark lane, and soon after found ourselves again in the open country. We presently came to a grove of trees, where one of our men said that there was a well and a drinking trough. Both we and our animals were excessively thirsty. We halted, and two of the men dismounted to draw water. It was so dark beneath the trees that they had some trouble to find the well. While they were looking for it I had fallen into a half doze, when I was startled by a most unearthly yell, followed by a violent tramping of hoofs. The two horses left to themselves had commenced to fight, and had then galloped away in the direction of the town. Some of the men were preparing to follow them, when we heard them returning. They galloped back to where they had started from, and then reared up on their hind legs and renewed the combat. It was with some difficulty and danger also that they were separated, and not till both their saddles had been knocked off and the pads strewn over the road. It was half an hour before these were collected, and the

saddles put together and fastened again on the backs of the horses. Then, having watered the horses and allayed our own thirst, we continued our journey.

We travelled wearily for many hours, sometimes through sandy lanes, sometimes along tracks, sometimes over what seemed in the dim light to be open plains. Our progress was very slow, we could seldom proceed beyond a walk, for our horses were becoming exhausted. The heat was very great, almost more oppressive than in the day. There was not even a breath of air, and the atmosphere was full of dust, so full that the dust formed a canopy in the sky above, through which only the largest stars could faintly shine. We had journeyed thus for many miles, when at length we reached the gardens that border the city of Muttra to the west. The gardens are separated by narrow lanes, which form a perfect labyrinth, difficult to find the way through in the daylight, almost impossible to avoid losing it by night. This mishap several times occurred to us. It was with great satisfaction that we found ourselves at length beyond the gardens, and it was with still greater delight that we presently got into the broad high road which runs towards the Bhurtpore territory.

Our satisfaction was shared by our horses. The hard level surface of the road was an agreeable change from the ruts and sand of the lanes. They stepped out briskly, and even once or twice broke readily into a short canter. We were walking them again after one of these canters, when a voice, coming as it were from the sky, demanded 'who we were.' We stopped surprised, and peered into the darkness. Our men advanced to the avenue of trees which bordered the road, but no one could they see. We were puzzled. The voice was no illusion; we all heard it; but from whence could it have come?

While we were speculating it came again, repeating the question. The voice came from just above the trees, from the summit of a black mass, which in the darkness we had not at first perceived. The voice was that of the road watchman, the black mass was the mound on which he kept guard. In reply to his inquiry our men informed him that they were troopers of the Rajah, and were returning to Bhurtpore, having been on a pilgrimage to bathe in the Ganges; and having given this information they proceeded in their turn to inquire the news of the city.

The watchman answered that all was now perfectly quiet. He told us that the Sepoys had marched away without doing any damage beyond setting fire to the house of the Baptist missionary, that the police were all at their posts, and everything just as it used to be.

The presence of the watchman on the mound seemed a proof of the truth of his statements, which carried conviction to our men, and produced an immediate change in their manner. They resumed to us the proper respectful demeanour which for some time past they had nearly entirely abandoned. The effect of the watchman's information on me and Mr. Joyce was equally great, though of a different kind. It removed all our fears and half our fatigue. In half an hour we should be at home, enjoying our tea and chatting over our adventures, and then asleep on our beds, obtaining the rest we so much required. We went on in high spirits.

Presently Mr. Joyce remarked how much lighter it seemed on the left side of the road than on the right. As there was no moon the appearance puzzled me, as it did also our men to whom I pointed it out. We were speculating on the cause, when we came to the track which would lead us, over some fields and the great

parade ground, to the back of the station. We passed through the avenue which bordered the road, and perceived the cause of the light. For miles and miles all along the horizon there stretched a line of fire; in some places it was burning brightly, elsewhere emitting only a dull glow.

The spectacle was so beautiful and so singular that with one accord we pulled up to admire it. Our admiration was mingled with other feelings not so agreeable. The line of fire we conjectured to be the burning Customs' hedge, which was a bank of thorny bushes, lately erected by the Government along the Customs' frontier to prevent the smuggling of salt and opium. The sight did not quite harmonise with the watchman's story. We went on with some misgivings. These misgivings were increased when we reached the station. We came into it near the gaol. From the gardens opposite came the same sort of glow as had proceeded from the duller parts of the burning hedge, and from among the trees appeared patches of sparks that suggested the idea of burning rafters.

From these appearances we concluded that some at least of the houses of the station had been burnt. We halted to deliberate. Just then the horseman next me whispered to me to look where he pointed. I did, and dimly made out the figures of several men lying on the ground as if asleep. I desired our men to surround them. The movement of the horses awoke them, they started up, and finding themselves in a circle of mounted men they seemed paralysed with terror. As they could give no account of themselves I desired one of our men to dismount and pinion them. But while he was looking for a rope, they suddenly darted between the horses, and disappeared as suddenly as if the ground had swallowed them up.

This incident confirmed our doubts of the truth of the watchman's story. Before proceeding further I thought it prudent to send on two horsemen to my house to reconnoitre. A long time passed; we began to fear that they had fallen into some ambuscade, when we heard the tramp of their horses returning, and soon after their voices calling to us to shout that they might know where we were. From the tone of their voices and the slow manner of their approach I concluded that they were not bringing any good news, nor were they.

They informed us that my house though not burnt was completely wrecked and plundered, the doors and windows torn out, and the garden was covered with the fragments of clothes and furniture. The servants had fled; the horsemen said that they had ridden round and shouted, but received no answer.

The burning hedge, the smouldering rafters had prepared us for this report; nevertheless, it depressed us greatly. It depressed us in proportion as the statements of the watchman had previously elated us.

What to do was now the question. Our men proposed that we should take refuge in the city, but the events of the afternoon had made us distrustful of the natives. We did not much like the idea of trusting ourselves among them. While we were deliberating I suddenly remembered that at the commencement of our march to Hodul, Captain Nixon had left one of his Bhurtpore regiments behind at Muttra to protect the city. As the rest of the army had mutinied, we made sure that these had done the same, and that if we entered the city they would probably murder us. We decided that we would ride on to Agra, report all that had occurred to the Government, and procure some soldiers to escort us back.

CHAPTER VII.

FLIGHT TO AGRA—(*continued*).

Our horses were too utterly tired to proceed much further without a rest, and both they and our men wanted food.

About a mile and a half along the road was a village named Aurungabad, so called in compliment to the Emperor Aurungzebe Alumgire, who had erected a pavilion in its neighbourhood, which, though much dilapidated, still existed. Here we resolved to proceed, feed our horses, and rest for a time.

At the entrance of the village was a police station. We rode up to it and shouted; a voice answered, inquiring who we were. My men replied that it was the 'sahib' (gentleman), the title by which in those days the magistrates of the districts were ordinarily designated. On this a man presented himself and informed me that he was the policeman. I desired him to get someone to hold our horses, and to get food for them and our men. On this the policeman woke up another man, who aroused a third, who came and took hold of the bridle of my horse and of Mr. Joyce's. We then dismounted and ascended the terrace in front of the police station, which was raised, a yard or so, above the roadway. The policeman brought us seats, and while the horses were being fed and watered, we sat down and conversed. The policeman told us a good deal of what had occurred in

the city and neighbourhood. This account was very different from that of the watchman, but in many particulars, as I afterwards discovered, equally incorrect. I learnt that the whole country was in confusion, and all the police had everywhere fled. He himself was the only one left in the village or neighbourhood.

By the time the horses were fed and rested the dawn began to break, and I then made an unpleasant discovery: my horse was too utterly knocked up to proceed further. What to do at first I did not know, but the policeman relieved me from the difficulty. He informed me that a Bunniah in the village had a horse he was anxious to part with, and which no doubt he would sell to me for a consideration.

I sent for the Bunniah, who produced the animal; it was a very sorry creature, but I thought would carry me as far as Agra, so I purchased it, the Bunniah undertaking to take charge of my own horse till I returned. We now thought of setting out, but just then the village watchman appeared and informed me that some travellers had just arrived from Agra and brought intelligence that the two Sepoy regiments there had mutinied, released the gaol prisoners, set fire to the station, and were now marching to Muttra.

I desired the watchman to bring the travellers, but they had left the village. Others, however, had come, whom I examined, and who told much the same story. The burning of Agra I thought an exaggeration, but as to the approach of the Sepoys there seemed no question but that it was true—the travellers had themselves seen them. I learnt, however, that they were moving in small parties, and not in uniform—a statement which much puzzled us. Whether in uniform or not we were not desirous of meeting them, and so we decided to travel

by the old disused high road, which went nearer the river, and afterwards more to the west, than the new road by which the Sepoys were advancing.

This old road—long unrepaired—was in many places little more than a track; elsewhere it was full of holes, and scored into deep furrows by the rains of years. It was bad and dangerous riding, but it would have the advantage of enabling us very much to escape observation, for the only travellers who passed along it were country people going from one village to another.

Before starting Mr. Joyce and I, at the request of our men, more completely disguised ourselves. We put on horsemen's boots and native vests, and round our heads swathed enormous turbans. Our complexions, of course, would betray us at near observation, but at a short distance we should not be distinguishable from our escort. All these preparations occupied time. It was near sunrise before we commenced our journey.

For some distance the road ran along the river bank. Our figures standing out against the sky were rather conspicuous; some villagers on the opposite side perceived us and began to fire, and continued to do so till we were out of sight.

In our ride the day before we had been struck by the deserted appearance of the country. Our surprise was now excited by the multitudes of people. In every direction the fields were dotted with parties of men, all were armed, all went in single file, and all appeared to be making for some point in the distance before us. The sight excited our curiosity as it did that of our men. I heard them discussing it; they agreed that it portended some mischief.

We had left the river, and had proceeded for some miles through a plain broken with ravines, when we ap-

proached a village. We passed through it unmolested, but at the other end we found a mob of men ; they were armed, and had collected on the road, as if to bar our passage. Our men shouted, and they moved aside, saluting us with jeers as we passed. One of them did more, he stepped into the road and took a steady aim at Mr. Joyce, but before he could pull the trigger his matchlock was jerked up by an older man who was standing beside him.

We had not gone far when we heard a noise behind us. Turning our heads we saw that the mob were pursuing us, they were waving their weapons and hallooing out threats and abuse. Their shouts brought forth a crowd of armed men from another village a little in advance. On this we put our horses to a gallop, and got by before they could reach the road and interrupt our passage. After this, where possible, we avoided the villages, leaving the road for the fields as we approached them. In one of the lanes I narrowly escaped a serious accident. In a confined place, where the banks on either side were high, the horses got jambed, and one began to kick. I was near, the first kick struck my horse and nearly knocked him over ; fortunately it pushed him further off, for the next kick lighted on my ankle. I thought at first the bone was broken, but I had escaped with only a severe bruise, so severe, however, that I did not get over the effects for some days, and meanwhile the pain was very great.

We had left the lane and were proceeding again across the open plain, when we saw before us a grove of trees. From behind the trees a column of smoke ascended, and there fell on our ears the confused murmur as of a great multitude. We passed the grove, and beheld to our left a long straggling town. An old mud fort stood at one end, a thatched bungalow at the other.

This was the town of Furrah; it was the head-quarters of the police and Revenue officers of the division. The houses of the town were on fire; the smoke rose in a tall straight column; high in the air it spread out far and wide, presenting the appearance of a gigantic umbrella. An immense crowd was collected round the town, and lines of men were approaching it from all directions, very much in the manner in which troops of ants move towards a lump of sugar.

After leaving the burning town, we entered a region of ravines, bare and arid; the sun had mounted high in the heaven, the heat was intense, and our thirst great. It was becoming almost insupportable, when we came on a little patch of cultivation, an oasis in the waste around. An old man was watering his field from a freshly dug well. We halted, and one of our men dismounted and let down his brass pot. The water he drew up was yellow with mud, but the old man assured us that it was sweet and wholesome. I had read of the enjoyment of drinking to travellers in the desert. I now realised it; I poured pot after pot of the turbid liquid down my throat; the sensation was delicious, but my thirst remained as great as before. One of the men then advised me merely to rinse my mouth, and this I found more efficacious.

After this I think I must have fallen into a half doze, for when one of our horsemen addressed me, I perceived that we had left the ravines and were travelling again over the plain. A large building rose on our left, we turned and rode towards it. We passed through a lofty gateway, much fallen to ruin, and entered a courtyard. Ranges of buildings ran round it, before the doors curtains were hung. Our men shouted, a curtain was raised, and an old man appeared. He directed us to

another gateway on the opposite side; we rode through it, and came on a broad stone terrace. Below it, to my great surprise, for I thought we were miles away, rolled the river Jumna.

A steep incline, roughly paved with stone, led us down to the river bank. Above there had been a breeze, but here almost a gale was blowing. It filled the air with sand, and raised quite high waves, which broke on the shore with splash and foam. The scene was very wild; the air was so thick with sand and dust that the opposite shores were invisible. The building appeared to rise from the margin of a lake. It rose sheer from the water's edge, towering up range over range very magnificently. The summit was crowned with cupolas.

Our horses were nearly perished with thirst; they rushed into the stream, and drank greedily. When their thirst was appeased, we ascended the bank and proceeded along a narrow lane deep in sand. The heat had become terrible—the sun poured down his rays nearly vertically above our heads; the burning wind moaned around, sweeping, as it went, clouds of dust that obscured the sky, and formed a lurid bank above the horizon.

The heat, the fatigue began to tell on both men and horses. We moved wearily along, the men silent and stooping their heads, the horses with difficulty raising their hoofs from the deep sand. As for me I fell into a sort of waking dream, the dreary landscape seemed to pass before me like a moving panorama. I lost all note of time, but for the pain of my ankle I should have fallen into real sleep, though to sleep beneath that burning sun might be to sleep for ever. A bright flash aroused me; the lane had brought us into the high road; its metalled surface, swept clean by the wind, stretched in a long bright line before us. The glare reflected from it was almost blinding. We found some relief by riding

along the side avenue, though the trees just here were young, and afforded but little shelter.

After some time we came again to the ravines, across which the road ran. No scene could be more desolate. The bare earth was scored by deep, winding fissures; what level surface remained was covered with dull, melancholy ruins. A more beautiful object soon gladdened our eyes. From behind a belt of trees towered a vast edifice of red stone; its summit glistened with white marble. We recognised the building as the mausoleum of the Emperor Akbar, and knew that we were approaching the end of our long journey.

In another hour we reached Agra, and proceeded to Mr. ——'s house, where A—— and the children and also my brother were then residing.

The appearance of our cavalcade excited great astonishment, for no intelligence of the mutiny of the Bhurtpore army had yet reached Agra, nor, notwithstanding the warnings I had sent, was that event the least anticipated. I learnt that the Sepoy regiments had not revolted, but had been disbanded and allowed to proceed to their homes. It was the appearance of parties of them along the road that had given rise to the reports of their mutiny that we had heard in the morning.

Since leaving Chattah we had ridden about a hundred miles, and had been in the saddle nearly continuously for eight-and-twenty hours. During that time I had eaten nothing, and I had not slept for two nights and nearly three days. Had our journey been made in a northern climate, we should have been nearly famished and quite exhausted. But we were neither very sleepy nor the least hungry; our chief suffering had been from thirst.

Since commencing our flight we must have drunk water to the extent of many pailfuls.

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN TO MUTTRA.

As soon as I had told my story, my brother suggested that I had better come with him and repeat it to Mr. Colvin. A drive of a mile or so brought us to Government House, a very large one-storied building, standing in grounds laid out something like an English park, and dotted over with small thorny trees. A crowd of servants in white dresses and gay turbans were seated before the door. As we pulled up several of them ran down the steps, and conducted us through an enclosed verandah that served as a hall into a handsomely furnished drawing-room. An attendant, with a dagger in his waistband and covered with a profusion of broad gold lace, presently entered and announced that Mr. Colvin was at leisure and would see me. So saying and requesting me to follow him, he led the way through several rooms to a large long one on the other side of the house. I entered through the folding doors, and found Mr. Colvin seated at the end of a long table, which was covered with books and papers. At his request I commenced to describe the mutiny of the Bhurtpore army, my flight, and the other occurrences I had witnessed.

As I proceeded in my narrative it struck me that Mr. Colvin was not paying much attention; I soon

became sure that he was not. He asked a question that showed he had quite confused parts of my story, and I found it impossible to set him right. He made no inquiries about his son, which, as he was known to be a most affectionate father, I thought odd, as I did also the little interest he evinced in the events I related. I left the room struck by a something unusual in Mr. Colvin's manner, and by the sad, wearied expression of his countenance. In the course of the afternoon I was told as a secret that it was feared that the excitement of the last few days had thrown Mr. Colvin's mind a little off its balance.

During the evening many visitors dropped in to call, and remained to dine; the conversation was all about the state of the country and the revolt of the various portions of the army. The sentiments that were uttered not a little surprised me. I found that the rural population was regarded as entirely loyal, and the apprehensions of danger expressed by the district officers treated as imaginary.

About eleven o'clock carriages were ordered round, and we drove off to sleep at a neighbouring house, which, being situated on the summit of a high mound, was considered best capable of defence. The house was guarded by two cannon placed on the terrace, and by a party of English soldiers. These precautions struck me as not quite in harmony with the opinions which during the evening I had listened to.

Several families had already arrived, and for the next half hour more kept coming. The floors were covered with beds and bundles of clothes. Many of the children, awaked from their first sleep, were crying; there were crowds of native servants hurrying about, and loudly gesticulating. Altogether the scene presented the same bustle and confusion as the deck of a steamer on com-

mencing its voyage. The noise—perhaps over-fatigue—had made me wakeful. I did not close my eyes till near the morning. I had hardly closed them, when I was awakened by a movement all around me, and found that the dawn was breaking, and everyone was preparing to return to their own houses.

On reaching our house I found a letter from the Seths, just brought by a special messenger. It was to inform me that the Bhurtpore and Ulwar armies had broken up and returned to their homes. They added that the city was at present tolerably quiet, but they did not think it would long continue so. They recommended me when I came back to bring with me some cannon and English soldiers. I drove to Government House, and communicated this news to Mr. Colvin.

I found him very kind, but more depressed than on the previous day. He was holding in his hand an open letter. Pointing to it he said, 'I have just heard of the death of General Anson.' Then after a pause he added, 'Nothing but ill news, each post announces some fresh misfortune.' Mr. Colvin told me that he could spare neither guns nor soldiers, but that I might get volunteers if I liked from among the clerks in the offices. But he feared I should not be able, as the parties that had already been sent out to other stations had taken nearly all the men who could be spared.

I spent the morning in going the round of the offices. With much trouble I collected eight volunteers; my brother lent me two elephants, and a little after midnight we started. The next morning about sunrise we reached the town of Furrah, whose burning I had witnessed on my ride to Agra.

The magistrate of Agra had come out to make an inquiry into the matter. We spent the day with him in

his tent. The magistrate was accompanied by a recently raised body of irregular cavalry, under the command of a Mohammedan named Syfcoollah Khan, an intelligent-looking man some fifty years of age. To his force were attached two nine-pounder field guns, each gun being in charge of an English artilleryman. Of Syfcoollah and his troop I shall have more to say in the course of my narrative.

About four o'clock in the afternoon the magistrate returned to Agra, and soon after a carriage and pair, sent by the Seths, arrived to convey me and Mr. Joyce to Muttra. From information I had received in the course of the day I had decided not to take the volunteers with us. The city was not so quiet as the Seths had represented. They were too few to fight, and if we had to fly their presence would prove an encumbrance. I did not care to expose their lives in what might prove a very dangerous undertaking. My determination occasioned them great disappointment, for they were looking forward to some exciting adventures. But they acquiesced in the propriety of my reasons when I had explained them.

When the horses had been watered and rested, Mr. Joyce and I entered the carriage, and, attended by a crowd of horsemen, we started for Muttra at a sharp trot, our companions bidding us a hearty farewell. They were themselves to return to Agra at evening on the elephants.

There were relays of horses at short intervals, but nevertheless we soon had to relax our pace. For some miles the road was so infamous—such a succession of holes and pits, filled with loose sand—that we could seldom proceed beyond a walk. It was a relief when we entered my own district and bowled rapidly along a surface smooth and hard as a billiard table. At the entrance

of the station an immense crowd was waiting to receive us. It consisted of the police, the officials of all grades, and most of the better class of inhabitants. They had come to show their loyalty, and they expressed it in terms so enthusiastic as, for the time, caused me in some degree to believe in it.

The sights we beheld as we drove on raised misgivings. The English houses had all been destroyed; we passed only bare walls blackened with smoke, and gardens strewn with cinders and the fragments of furniture. Having searched in vain for a roof to shelter us, I decided to accept the offer of the Seths, and for the present to take up our residence in their house in the city.

I had resided many years in India, but so apart did we English live from the natives, that of their habits of life among themselves I was nearly entirely ignorant. The prospect of entering the house of the Seths had for me all the charm of adventure. The hot weather twilight is so short that it was dark by the time we reached the city.

We drove through the barricade I had lately thrown up, and proceeded along a narrow lane of low mud-houses. It presently widened, and the houses rose to lofty edifices, whose summits, in the darkness, we could only dimly distinguish. The lower storeys consisted of shops, brightly lighted by a profusion of small earthen lamps. The street was densely crowded, but the reception afforded me was very different from that which had been given me at the station. No one made way, no one saluted; the only notice we attracted was defiant and insolent glances.

Before long the carriage came to a stop, and, by the light of the lamps, I perceived that we had arrived at a huge wooden barricade, stretching right across the street from side to side. A mob of armed men swarmed before it. They were dressed in every variety of costume, and

carried every sort of weapon. Seen by the flickering light of the lamps, nothing could be more picturesque than the assembly; but I was more impressed by astonishment and a little apprehension as to what it could mean.

In a minute the mystery was explained. The head of the police rode up and informed me that we had arrived at the Seths' house, and that the barricade was one they had erected to keep off the mob. The armed men were levies they had raised to defend it. While this information was being imparted, a man appeared preceded by two torch-bearers. He issued some orders, the armed men moved on one side, and the carriage passed through the barricade by a narrow aperture just wide enough to admit it. Beyond the barricade the street was empty and nearly dark; two immense buildings rose on either side. The carriage stopped again, a crowd of servants advanced, requested us to alight, and preceded us down a very narrow, dark lane. We presently came to a stone gateway, where, surrounded by torch-bearers and a still larger crowd of servants, we found the two Seths standing waiting to receive us.

They welcomed us to their house with great politeness, and conducted us through the gateway, which, I noticed, was filled with armed men, to a courtyard. We crossed the court to a small door, and ascended a very narrow, winding staircase. The staircase was of stone, and so narrow that only one of us could ascend at a time. It was also extremely steep, and full of sharp turns at right angles. After mounting to a great height, we came out on a broad stone terrace. On it a white cloth was spread and chairs arranged, on which, at the request of the Seths, we sat down. The Seths seated themselves by us, the attendants stood aside, and the torch-bearers retired. When my eyes had become accustomed to the

darkness I perceived that we were on the flat roof of the house.

On one side a white dome was indistinctly visible, on the other side seemed an abyss. From its depths came the sound of a gentle ripple, and over it was wafted a faint breeze, moist and cool as if it had blown across an expanse of water. I concluded from these signs the terrace overlooked the river Jumna. After a short conversation the Seths retired, begging us to consider their house as our own, and leaving several attendants to execute our orders.

I had accompanied the Seths to the head of the staircase; on returning, I found Mr. Joyce in conversation with a man whom I had not previously noticed. I called Mr. Joyce aside, and inquired who the man was, for his sudden appearance had rather surprised me. Mr. Joyce signed to the man to approach, and asked with a smile if I did not recognise him. I looked, and under the disguise of a native I beheld Mr. Hashman, one of the two clerks about whose fate we had been so anxious. While I was congratulating him on his escape a second man advanced, who, in a similar disguise, I perceived was the other missing clerk, Mr. Hashman's brother.

We all sat down, and the two brothers told us their adventures, which, a little later on, I shall relate. We had so much to ask, and they to tell, that an hour passed quickly by. Mr. Joyce then suggested that we might as well call for dinner. I had now an opportunity of observing the extreme simplicity of the habits of life of even the wealthiest Hindoos.

Our hosts were the richest men in India; they maintained an army of servants, they possessed whole chests of gold and jewels, and they resided in a house which, for size and architectural beauty, would compare with the

palaces of the nobles of Europe. But, on ordering our dinner, I found that they were destitute of what to us are the most ordinary conveniences. They had neither plates nor dishes, nor, beyond a few tea-cups, did their house contain either glass or china of any other description.

The supply of food was equally limited in variety. We had to make our meal on rice and coarse cakes of unleavened flour, and they were so saturated with oil and some perfume that it was with difficulty I could swallow a few mouthfuls. They could supply us with no drink but water, and milk that had been simmered over a fire, and which had in the process acquired an overpowering flavour of smoke. They procured us some tea, very bad, and an immense tea-pot of solid silver, but the establishment did not contain a kettle, and we had to make the tea with water brought up in brass bowls.

Our dinner over, the Seths' manager was announced. He had come to pay his respects, and to inform us more fully than his masters had done of the state of the city and of the events that had occurred during our absence. This proceeding was in strict conformity with Indian etiquette, which leaves the communication of details to the subordinates. The manager remained some time. When he retired the servants brought us beds—those light ones used by the natives. I had hardly slept for four nights. I was very tired; the cool breeze flowed gently over us, the river murmured below; I was soon asleep. I did not wake till I was aroused by the rays of the rising sun the next morning.

CHAPTER IX.

DEFENCE OF THE CITY.

I HAD informed the Seths' manager that I intended this morning to visit the station. As soon as we were dressed we descended to the street, where we found a carriage awaiting us, and accompanied by a party of horsemen we drove off towards the office. On reaching the entrance to the grounds we perceived that the avenue was thickly littered with fragments of paper, a sight which prepared us for the scene we beheld on arriving at the building. Nothing was left but the bare walls, and these were black with smoke, and scored with the marks of pickaxes and crowbars. The roof had fallen in, and brought with it portions of the summits of the walls. The floor was covered with the débris. We clambered inside over the heaps of fallen masonry, and satisfied ourselves that no portion of the building had escaped, and then we proceeded to search for the body of Mr. Burlton. I had learnt from the manager the previous evening that Mr. Burlton had been shot, and that his corpse was still lying unburied.

After a long search we found the body lying in a dry ditch at the end of the grounds. There was little left of it but the skeleton, and this a dog was gnawing. We flung clods of earth and he slunk unwillingly away, snarling and showing his teeth as he retreated. The body was

lying on its back with the arms upraised, the hands were untouched; surmounting the fleshless arms they had the appearance of gloves, and gave to the skeleton an air of ghastly masquerade.

I had seen Mr. Burlton but once in life; it was while he was a guest in my house. I had driven into the station and found him seated at breakfast. As I had then seen him so I now recalled his figure and features, but beneath them there appeared the skull and bones lying before me. The picture was very horrible, but I could not dispel it—for some days it continued to haunt me.

There was no time to prepare a coffin, so I sent for some labourers and had a grave dug. The remains were wrapped in a sheet and laid within it. As the earth was thrown over them we stood by with uncovered heads, our silent prayers the only service.

These last sad offices over we re-entered the carriage, and drove round the station. It was one scene of desolation and wanton destruction. Nothing was left of the houses but the blackened walls and the charred fragments of wood and thatch. Round each house was strewed a chaos of broken furniture, scraps of clothing, pieces of glass and china. The gardens were untouched, and their bright flowers and rich foliage made only more melancholy the ruins they surrounded.

The church had not been burnt, but its escape was due simply to the inability of the mob to reach the roof, which was the only combustible portion. They had inflicted all the injury they were able. The windows were smashed, the door frames wrenched out; of the pulpit, pews, and altar only broken fragments remained. In many places the pavement had been dug up.

It was late before we got back to the Seths' house.

Our hosts had in the meanwhile been busy arranging for our comfort. We found a large room prepared and a table ready spread for our breakfast. They had procured table cloths, china, knives and forks, from some shop in the city. The drive had made us hungry; we enjoyed the breakfast our servants had prepared. We had fish and rice and eggs; there was no bread, but thin cakes of unleaven flour were no bad substitute.

When the table was cleared I sat down to write; my companions, having nothing to do, disposed themselves for a siesta. Our room was long and narrow, the windows on one side opened on to a terrace overhanging the river, those on the other side looked into a courtyard. I was absorbed in my writing, the others had fallen asleep, when I was aroused by the sound of a great commotion; men were hurrying to and fro, there were shouts and cries, and from over the river came the report of matchlocks. I started up, my companions awoke; we seized our guns and ran out on the terrace.

The terrace was already filled with the Seths' servants, the flat roofs of the neighbouring houses were also crowded with men. They were all looking towards the river. On the further side were several villagers, shouting and throwing their arms aloft as if imploring assistance. As soon as I could procure silence, we made out that they lived in a village behind a grove of trees near the bank, and that it was being attacked by the inhabitants of a larger village a little further off. They were begging me for aid to repel the attack; I had none to give. I could merely promise that when order was restored their assailants should be punished. The promise did not seem to give them much satisfaction. They remained for some time on the bank, continuing their cries for assistance. As night came on a pyramid

of flame shot up from beyond the river; the attacking party having plundered the village had now set it on fire.

This incident made me aware, and not very agreeably so, of my position. Outside the city I had no authority, and I soon also learnt that I had not very much within it.

In the course of the next day the Seths came to see me; their visit was partly complimentary, partly to dissuade me from leaving the house, at all events for the present. They feared that if I appeared in the streets I should very likely be murdered. Other visitors called to give me the same advice, which I had already received from my own people. I resolved not to attend to it. If we stayed in now we should have to stay in for good, and it was better to meet the danger than to live in constant apprehension of it. So at sunset we drove out as usual, we kept our guns in our hands and at full cock, and the carriage was well surrounded by our guards and horsemen. The streets were densely crowded, and the crowds were very disrespectful. They were nearly all armed, and I noticed, with some uneasiness, that many carried matchlocks. No attempt, however, was made to attack us.

Matters continued in this state for three or four days —each day the demeanour of the populace was more defiant. On the fourth day an incident occurred that brought things to a crisis. On hearing that I was returning from Agra, the villagers had been seized with a panic, for they thought I was bringing with me troops and cannon. When the news reached them they were busy plundering the station; they fled precipitately every man to his home. Finding in a day or two that I had brought back only Mr. Joyce, they recovered their confidence, and sent a message to the Seths to turn me

out of the city. No attention being paid to the message they despatched a letter, warning the Seths that if I remained in their house they would come and burn it. This letter alarmed the Seths; they brought it to me. I thought it a piece of bombast, and told them not to mind it. They, however, regarded the threat as serious, and the event proved that they were right.

A night or two after a fireball was thrown into a courtyard of the house, where a large quantity of straw and timber was stored. Fortunately, it missed these, and lighted on a stone terrace, where it burnt itself out, doing no more harm than nearly frightening to death some servants who were there sleeping. This incident showed that the villagers had either friends in the city, or the means of entering it themselves. I felt that if I was to continue in my present position I must take measures to protect the city from outside attacks, and also to make my authority respected within it.

It would be tedious to describe the measures I adopted; at this distance of time they would possess little interest. To assist me in carrying them out I summoned a meeting of the principal inhabitants. They were to assemble at night on the Seths' great terrace. Muttra was a large city; many persons had flocked into it from the outside. Just then it must have contained more than eighty thousand inhabitants. I had summoned to the meeting every person at all wealthy or of any position. All who were summoned came, and yet, to my surprise, the assembly did not consist of much more than fifty persons.

A white cloth was spread on the terrace, and at one end a canopy erected; under it were placed chairs for me, Mr. Joyce, and the Seths. About nine o'clock the company began to arrive; each as he entered made his salaam, and seated himself cross-legged on the floor. To

my surprise the Seths insisted on doing the same. The Seths held rank next to the sovereign princes, and in their intercourse with Europeans were very tenacious of their position, but now they waived it. On the arrival of the first persons they rose from their chairs and seated themselves beside them on the floor. They informed me afterwards that neither their wealth nor their rank gave them the right to assert any superiority in social meetings over their caste brethren.

The assembly was so profuse in its expressions of loyalty, and in its promises to give every assistance to maintain order and the authority of the Government, that on their leaving I felt assured I might rely on their support. I learnt afterwards that in the course of the night private assemblies were held to consider if their promises should be carried out. It was decided that they should be at least for the present. This decision, however, was not unanimous, and letters were at the same time dispatched to the King of Delhi, informing him of the unprotected state of the city, and requesting that he would send troops and take possession of it.

In the end, after great trouble, some danger, and some severity, I succeeded in disarming the mob of the city and re-establishing my authority—or rather, I should say, the authority of the Government. My next step was to protect the city against the attacks of the villagers, who had expressed their intention of shortly coming to plunder it.

Muttra was not fortified, but its position and construction rendered it easily defensible. On two sides the river formed a barrier, on the other sides the outer walls of the houses constituted a nearly continuous rampart. I had several boats removed from the bridge, and barricades erected at all the entrances on the land sides. So far

all was easy, but barricades require men to defend them, and as soon as I endeavoured to raise men my difficulties commenced. The city, for its size, was very populous; from the system of caste and trade guilds nearly the whole population was under the control of fifty or so of the leading inhabitants. These, with a word, could have raised several thousand men; they would not raise one. They, and the rest who had anything to lose, were really in terror of the villagers, really anxious they should be kept out of the city. But they would not, apparently could not, combine to effect that object. They were prepared to defend each their own houses, and many, like the Seths, had gone to great expense to do so. They had hired men and run up walls and barricades. They were even willing to defend their own lane, that is, when the lane happened to be inhabited by the same caste. But to unite to defend the city was an undertaking entirely beyond them. They regarded it as exclusively the affair of the Government, and one with which they themselves had no concern.

Force was out of the question, and argument useless. By raising additional police I was enabled to spare men enough to man the works at the two principal entrances. By threats, persuasions, and something very like bribery, I induced the leading castes to defend the other gates in the different quarters where they resided. The head men and their relations were appointed to the commands with good salaries; they made the other men come for nothing.

My experience in this business enabled me to understand how it was that the Mohammedans, so few as they were in number, so easily conquered India. A small body of determined men could have utterly destroyed Muttra. The inhabitants would have allowed

themselves to be massacred in detail, from sheer inability to unite in common defence.

After all my efforts one barricade remained unsupplied with a garrison. It was suggested to me that I should entrust its defence to the Bhurtpore regiment. This was the regiment that Captain Nixon had left behind to protect Muttra, when we commenced our ill-fated march towards Delhi. It was its presence, as the reader may remember, that decided me not to enter the city after my flight from Hodul. In the first excitement on my return I had forgotten its existence, or supposed that it had followed the rest of the army to Bhurtpore. Some chance observation of the Seths made me aware that it was still with us. I suppose I expressed in my countenance the uneasiness the announcement occasioned me. For the Seths smiled and remarked that, after inspecting the men, they did not think I should consider their presence very dangerous; nor did I.

I had the regiment paraded the next morning. I found it a mere herd of timid villagers; none of the men had uniforms, only a portion had firearms, and their firearms were the commonest kind of matchlock; their powder was damp and would not explode, and their bullets were old battered musket balls, dug out of our targets. The men, however, possessed the one military virtue of obedience. Having been told by Captain Nixon to remain at Muttra till that order was countermanded, they declined to leave, and no persuasion of mine sufficed to alter their determination. As they were here, and we had to feed them, my people thought it would be as well to make use of them, and so proposed that they should guard the vacant entrance.

It was a duty they were not at all willing to undertake. It was only after much discussion, and after a very

careful inspection of the defences, that they consented to occupy them. In a few days they became more valiant: they had satisfied themselves that the works were too strong to be forced easily without artillery; and, having ascertained this, they informed me that if an enemy attacked the place they would beat them off, and, when they commenced to run away, even perhaps they would pursue them. Their courage was not put to the test. The defences of the city having been completed, the villagers for the time abandoned their intention of attacking us, and expended their energies in fighting among themselves.

And now relieved from all immediate danger, the city quiet, no enemy threatening us from without, there commenced for us a life of which few Englishmen have had experience—a life so novel, so singular, that it almost seemed as if we had been transported to another region, another age. But, before I describe it, it will be best to give an account of the events that had occurred in the city and station during my absence.

CHAPTER X.

THE PLUNDERING OF THE TREASURY.

When the treasure was reported laden, Lieutenant Burlton wished good-bye to his companions and left the room where they were assembled. Outside the office the carts were standing ready yoked, the guard drawn up, and the other preparations completed. Mr. Burlton mounted his horse and gave the order to march. The native officer stepped up and said, 'Where?' Mr. Burlton replied, 'To Agra, of course.' The officer turned to the guard and shouted, 'No, no, not to Agra; to Delhi!' Mr. Burlton exclaimed, 'Oh! you traitor!' As the words left his lips he fell dead, shot through the heart. A Sepoy had crept up behind him, and levelled his musket; as Mr. Burlton finished speaking he fired.

This shot was the signal, the guard broke their ranks, and made a rush into the office. How the English who were there escaped I have already related. As they ran off the respectable portion of the crowd fled also. The Sepoys then proceeded to set fire to the building. Its height and solidity made the task difficult. After some failures they succeeded; they made a pile of the chairs and tables, and on it they heaped thatch torn off a neighbouring shed. This they lighted. When the office was well in flames they marched off, taking the treasure with them, and throwing handfuls of copper coins among the mob that had remained.

These coins they had found in a bag, one of several that were stored in the treasure-room. They took one, the contents of which they then distributed; the others, I know not why, they left, as they did also twelve thousand pounds' worth of small silver coins, and uncurrent rupees that were accumulating for transmission to the Calcutta mint. The main body of the Sepoys, with the treasure, took the road to Delhi, which skirted the city; a small detachment proceeded to the gaol to release the prisoners. The gaol was strong, and partly fortified. The gaol guard were armed with muskets. They could easily have defended the building had they chosen, but they did not. On the approach of the Sepoys they threw open the gates, the Sepoys entered, and began to release the prisoners.

Near the gaol lived a retired English sergeant. Hearing a noise and shouting, he came out of his house. Some Sepoys who were loitering by the gaol gate perceived him and fired. The sergeant had the presence of mind to throw himself on the ground, and the bullets passed over him. Before the Sepoys could reload he had risen, reached his stable, mounted his horse, and escaped. The Sepoys followed and set fire to his house.

When the prisoners were released the detachment marched on and joined their main body. Most of the prisoners accompanied them, as did also the gaol guard and a large mob who had collected from the bazaar and the English houses. Among them were two of my own servants. While waiting for the detachment, the mutineers had amused themselves by breaking open one of the treasure-chests and distributing handfuls of the contents among a mob which had flocked out from the city. They now resumed their march, and, halting at dark, reached Chattah the next morning. The chief inhabit-

ants, who had sworn to me to defend the caravanserai, came out to meet the Sepoys and conducted them into it. They also pointed out to them my property, and the Government records and treasure, which, without their assistance, the Sepoys might not have discovered. The Sepoys carried off the treasure and my horses; the records and the rest of my things they broke to pieces and set on fire. Having done so, they proceeded to Hodul.

When the Sepoys had left, the men of the town rose, and turned out the police and the other officials, having first plundered them of their money and of the greater part of their clothes. Some of the officials lived in the neighbourhood and went home, the rest took the road to Muttra. At the first village they passed the inhabitants sallied out and stripped them of the few clothes the townspeople had left them, and also of the little money that some of them had managed to conceal.

Poor Bycunt, the Bengalee clerk, bore the operation very badly. When the villagers seized him he fainted, and in that condition he was deprived of his garments. His companions poured water over him, and brought him to, but for the rest of the journey they had to support him. They were none of them men accustomed to fatigue or exposure. They suffered much on the journey. They reached the city quite exhausted, but, naked as they were, they were ashamed to enter it. They concealed themselves in the fields till the night enabled them to reach their homes unobserved.

The Sepoys moved more briskly. By nine in the morning they reached Kosee. On approaching the town, they sent a message to Captain Ruggonath Sing either to move off, according to the agreement, or else to come out and fight. Ruggonath begged for half an hour to finish his breakfast, which was granted. His meal concluded,

he marched away, taking with him the two guns of the Seths and my tents and horses, and everything else belonging to me he could lay his hands on.

The Sepoys then entered the town and plundered the Revenue Office, carried off the money, but burnt the records. They also set fire to the little bungalow in which I had been residing. This done they went on. Soon after they met my carriage. They would have let it pass but for my little dog; he poked out his head and barked. Some of the men recognised him; they made the coachman turn the horses and accompany them. At the next halting place my servant managed to escape, and after many adventures joined me at Muttra, bringing the dog also safe with him.

The mutineers arrived at Hodul not very long after we had left. The Bhurtpore and Ulwar armies allowed them to pass unmolested. In due time they reached Delhi with their treasure. Their subsequent fate I never learnt, though I took some pains to discover.

I will now return to the station. While the Sepoys were setting fire to the office the crowd remained looking on. When the Sepoys left, they rushed in to plunder. Before they could reach the room where the silver was the flames drove them out. It was some hours before the building could be re-entered, for, as the fire slackened, the roof began to fall. Meanwhile the news had spread that some of the treasure was left, and all the country flocked in to plunder it. Quarrels soon arose, swords were drawn, and clubs wielded. Before the money was carried off many were killed, more wounded; others were badly burnt and injured by the falling fragments of the roof and walls.

The treasure disposed of, the mob turned their attention to the records. These were kept on stone shelves,

and in a room separated from the rest of the building. The fire had in consequence but little damaged them. The mob, however, did not permit them to escape: they threw them on the smouldering embers, or tore them in pieces and scattered the pieces over the ground. I may remark here that the natives everywhere displayed towards the Government records the same animosity as they did to the account-books of the Bunniahs, and for a similar reason. They regarded them as the machinery by which we enforced our severe taxation, and maintained that disciplined order which had become so distasteful to them.

All this while Mr. Burlton's body had lain where it fell. It was now stripped and thrown into the ditch, where I and Mr. Joyce found it.

The plunder of the office was followed by that of the English houses. In this amusement the villagers spent what remained of the day. The houses contained little that they valued; that little they carried off, the rest they broke to pieces. In the morning they returned and continued the work of destruction. They concluded it by setting fire to the houses. The third day they came down as before, and dug out the ends of the burnt beams and any pieces of iron that were imbedded in the walls. They then proposed to attack the city. The Seths and the other chief inhabitants had anticipated some such proceeding, and had prepared for it by running barricades before their houses, and engaging as many fighting men as they could procure to defend them. At this juncture the news reached them that I was returning, and rumour added that I was also returning with troops and artillery—a rumour that owed its origin to the presence of the two guns and the newly-raised cavalry in Mr. Drummond's camp at Furrah. The report struck the

villagers with consternation; they fled precipitately back to their homes, and, fearful of being there pursued, endeavoured during the night to destroy the evidence of their misconduct by concealing the English property they had plundered. Some they hid in straw stacks and underground granaries; the rest they cast into dry wells, from whence a good deal was afterwards recovered.

The mobs in the city who had also risen similarly retired, the police ventured out of their hiding-places, and the officials made a show of resuming their authority.

The citizens of Muttra had no love for our Government, or any desire for its continuance. But for the moment my return was welcomed by the better class of the inhabitants, for it put an end to a state of confusion that appeared likely to end in the plunder of their shops and houses.

To no persons was my return more welcome than to my two clerks. When the Sepoys, after shooting Mr. Burlton, rushed into the office these two clerks ran out of it with the others. They got separated in the garden: when they reached the river they found that their companions were out of sight. They followed them to the city, where the police refused them admittance. Apprehensive of the mob, they retreated into the neighbouring gardens, where a Brahmin took compassion on them, and concealed them till the night in a shed attached to his temple. He then guided them in the dark along the river bank to the private stairs that led up to the Seths' house.

The Seths received them very kindly, but told them plainly that they should have a difficulty in keeping them. They said that the feeling against Christians was so strong that if their presence in the house was suspected it might cause the mob to attack it. The Seths, how-

ever, promised to conceal them as long as they could. They made them put on native dresses, and had them conducted to a room in a remote part of the house, giving them strict injunctions not to venture out of the room, nor show themselves at the windows.

In this apartment they remained for three days in great trepidation; at night a confidential servant brought them food, during the rest of the time they were left to themselves. From the sounds that reached them from the outside, the city appeared to be in great confusion. They heard shouts, cries, the report of guns, and the tramp and murmur as of moving multitudes.

On the morning of the fourth day, the Seths paid them a visit, and told them that they could conceal them no longer, for a report had got abroad that there were Christians hid in the house, and the mob had expressed their intention of breaking in to see. The Seths said that they would keep them till the evening, and then have them conveyed across the river to a village from whence they could find their way to Agra. The two clerks had but little expectation that they should succeed in doing so, and regarded the intimation that they must leave the house very much as sentence of death.

As the day advanced the confusion outside seemed to increase. Several times they heard the mob come surging up to the house; they expected every instant that they would attack it. All of a sudden the noises ceased. They were wondering the cause, when the curtain at the doorway was lifted, and the Seths entered and announced to them the joyful intelligence of my approaching return.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CITY OF MUTTRA.

MUTTRA, though little known beyond the confines of India, is a place of much celebrity within them. It is to the Hindoo what Mecca is to the Mohammedans, what Jerusalem was to the Christians of the Middle Ages. It is the birthplace of their religion, the spot with which most of their sacred legends are connected. The original city stood about two miles to the west of the present one. It was abandoned some time in our seventeenth century in consequence of the river Jumna changing its course. The inhabitants had to follow the river, for they depended on the pilgrims for their support, and what brought the pilgrims was the bathing in the sacred stream. On its banks the present city arose.

The present city is chiefly modern, most of the best buildings have been erected since the commencement of our rule. Seen from the river it is very picturesque: a succession of fine houses that rise like castles, bathing places, and little temples to whose fairy-like lightness no words can do justice. From the land side its appearance is less pleasing; at a distance it resembles very much a gigantic ants' nest, for the outer houses are dingy in colour and closely huddled together, nor on a nearer approach is the prospect more agreeable. Before the city lies a bare tract of uneven ground, over it wander

dogs and pigs feeding on the filth and garbage with which it is thickly strewn. The dogs have no particular owner, the swine are the property of the low castes, who, regarded as too impure to dwell within the city, cluster in villages just without it.

To the north and west extend gardens. To them each morning the Brahmins repair, and, stupefied with bhang, pass the day lying beneath the shade of the trees, oblivious of all the world beyond. When they wake up they amuse themselves with wrestling and other athletics. The Brahmins of Muttra are but little respected. By the educated and better classes they are regarded as a set of idle, dissolute beggars. In each garden is a temple, in many are also tombs and pavilions, very small but exceedingly pretty. The perfection of Hindoo art, however, is to be seen in the principal street of the city. There is nothing like it in India, nor that I know of in the world. On either side the houses rise vast and solid; before them appears to hang a veil of lace, so delicate, so exquisite is the carving of the stone tracery that fills the balconies and windows.

As becomes so holy a place Muttra is full of temples, but a traveller might pass through and not be aware of it. The exteriors of the temples do not differ from the dwelling-houses. Indeed, the same roof occasionally covers both house and temple, as well as a shop in the lower storey. The finest temple is that of the Seths'. It stands immediately opposite their house on the other side of the narrow street. A richly carved gateway leads to a spacious courtyard; round three sides are arcades, along the fourth stretches a terrace, mounted on it is the shrine. Dimly lighted, hung with curtains, it has much the appearance of a stage; the services that go on suggest a performance. Bells ring, cymbals clash, horns blow,

and incense is burnt. In the intervals the Brahmins recite verses from the sacred poems. Their utterance is too rapid for an English ear to follow, but the sonorous rhymes and the rise and fall of the voices is not unmelodious.

In the further recesses, the object of this adoration is dimly visible—a hideous idol, bedaubed with red paint, and blackened by the smoke of the lamps that for more than half a century have burnt before it. Over the head of the idol there is suspended a golden canopy; beneath it, so it was then said, were greater treasures. In a vault below reposed the hoards of the founder of the temple, the adopted grandfather of my hosts. The terrace in front of the shrine was spread with carpets, and shaded by canopies of red cloth. Beneath them cross-legged sit the better class of spectators; those of a lower rank, standing, usually fill the court below.

In striking contrast to this the chief temple, rises at the end of the street the great mosque—its lofty minarets and spreading domes forming a grander object, and suggesting a purer faith, a higher ideal. An inscription on the gateway records the date of its erection and the praises of its founder, that 'Light of Islam (Noor-ul-Mussulmanee), guardian of the faith of Mohammed, the Emperor Alumgire.' This inscription is in letters of blue enamel on a white ground. The richness of the colours I have nowhere seen equalled; I was never tired of admiring them.

About the erection of this mosque there is a pretty tradition. The site was formerly occupied by shops of butchers; their presence vexed the Hindoos, they complained to the Governor. The Governor, a tolerant man, as many of the Indian Mohammedans then were, removed the shops. The butchers went to Agra and peti-

tioned the Emperor Alumgire. Anticipating their complaint, the Governor had commenced the erection of a mosque on the site of the demolished shops. To remove a mosque was more than that bigoted Emperor could bring himself to direct; he accepted the situation and became the patron of the edifice, granting the butchers land elsewhere.

The memory of this Governor is still dear to the Hindoos. In my time, though two centuries had passed, they would in seasons of trouble still invoke his aid, rubbing their foreheads on the walls of the mosque he had erected, and saying—'Ahi! Abdool-Nubbee Khan tarâ binna Muttoorah sunnee.' ('Oh! Abdool-Nubbee Khan, we are sad without you.')

Any description of Muttra would be incomplete without some notice of the Seths, to whose selection of it, as a residence, the city owes much of its present prosperity, most of its finest buildings. At various times they confided to me a good deal of their family history. Something of what they told me I will briefly repeat.

Their ancestors came from the Deccan, somewhere near Bombay. Their bank was an old one, but rich natives are often childless. In default of heirs the managers were adopted. The business thus passed from family to family till, towards the close of the last century, it came into the possession of the then manager, Seth Gokul Paruk. Gokul Paruk had the good fortune not only to succeed to his master's wealth, but also to obtain the treasurership of the state of Gwalior. The Mahratta armies then swept the country far and near; half the wealth of India found its way into Gwalior their capital. The treasurer had many opportunities of enriching himself, and not the least was the payment of the troops.

The soldiers received their pay very irregularly, seldom till they showed signs of mutiny for the want of it. When this crisis approached the treasurer was sent for, and a palaver ensued. Eventually matters were arranged. Scindiah the Rajah paid less than he owed, more than the army received. Before many years had elapsed Gokul Paruk had become the richest man in India, perhaps in the world. He was popularly supposed to possess fourteen millions of our money. He must really have owned several. He had, I know, an income of forty thousand pounds a year from the sums he had invested in our Government securities alone, and what natives invest bears but a small proportion to what they hoard.

Gokul was a man of extreme prudence, and he showed this quality in nothing more than in obtaining a domicile in Muttra, so soon as it had passed under British rule, and removing there the greater part of his treasures. He died childless, as had his master, and like him was succeeded by his manager, Seth Munnee Ram; according to native scandal by virtue of a forged will. Munnee Ram, with his master's wealth, did not inherit all his caution—the Gwalior court was full of intrigues—to one he fell a victim.

The Maharajah Scindiah was seated on his throne holding full durbar. Casting his eyes on Munnee Ram, he remarked 'Sethjee!' (oh! Banker) 'you have been a long time treasurer, you must have much of my money.' The durbar over, Munnee Ram sought Colonel Skinner, who then held high command in the Mahratta army. Said the Colonel, when he heard what had happened, 'Take shawls and jewels, ever so many trays of them, and five million of silver rupees, and present them to-morrow to Scindiah at the durbar, and say, 'My Lord and Good Patron! all I have is yours, acquired through the favour

of your Highness; be pleased to accept from the hand of your servant this small portion of it.'

Munnee Ram was hot-tempered, the advice of the Colonel was not acceptable. He attended the durbar, but instead of a present he produced his account books, and addressing Scindiah he said, 'My Lord! false persons have deceived you; it is your Highness, not I, that owes money, and the amount is ten millions.' This was too much. As the Scripture expresses it, 'the form of the king's visage was changed;' his fury blazed forth. Munnee Ram was haled away to the fortress, and there tied by ropes of raw leather to a gun on one of the bastions. As such ropes dry they contract. Munnee Ram had before him a death of agony. In this extremity Colonel Skinner stood his friend; he hurried to the palace—he had influence; he used it, and so effectually that Munnee Ram was brought down from the bastion. After a short confinement in his own house he was released on payment of the same amount that he had so imprudently asserted the Rajah to be indebted to him.

On attaining his liberty he bathed, put on new clothes, and waited on Colonel Skinner to express his gratitude. 'Ah,' said the Colonel smiling, 'my advice was not so bad after all!' Munnee Ram not only expressed his gratitude but showed it. Colonel Skinner had large estates, but some years after fell into difficulties. Munnee Ram extricated him from them by a loan of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds without interest.

The receipt of the ten millions put Scindiah in such good humour that he took Munnee Ram again into favour, pressed him to continue in his office of treasurer, and when Munnee Ram declined permitted him to leave Gwalior unmolested, and, what was more, to take his treasures with him. Munnee Ram retired to Muttra,

where in due time he was gathered to his fathers. His ashes repose beside those of Gokul Paruk his master, beneath a pretty cupola, in a garden on the banks of the Jumma. To mark their relative positions in life, the stone eaves that border the dome of the tomb of Gokul project over and cut into those that surround the tomb of Munnee Ram, his servant.

The house in which the Seths resided had been only recently erected. Viewed from the outside it was very imposing; in Europe it would be termed a palace. The interior was disappointing, a collection of mere cells surrounding small courtyards. The room occupied by the Seths as their sitting-room was, however, a pretty enough apartment; it was in the upper storey, and overlooked the river. Like all native rooms it was entirely destitute of furniture, with the exception of a gigantic bolster, which to persons who sat cross-legged on the floor served the purpose of an arm-chair. For English visitors proper chairs were provided. A white cloth was stretched over the floor, and the walls were full of small niches, in which lamps were placed at night, and any small article during the day. The greater portion of the house was devoted to the women, and into that part I never entered.

The women appeared to be kept in strict seclusion. I never saw them, either on the roof or at the windows; their only glimpses of sky or fresh air must have been what they could get in the balconies of the lofty narrow courtyards. Their lot, however, in this respect must have been enviable to that of the women in the interior of the city. How these poor creatures endured the heat and the horrible smells was to me a source of never-ending wonder.

The Seths' house was constructed of stone, and the

solidest of masonry; the massive thickness of the walls contrasting very harmoniously with the slender columns that supported the balconies, and the delicate traceries that filled the windows. Before the disturbances, the Seths passed much of their time at Brindabun, a town about nine miles off, up the river, and which has the peculiarity of being almost entirely composed of temples. To the scores already existing, the Seths had recently added another, an edifice of surpassing magnificence. It always reminded me of the imaginary plans of the temple of Jerusalem, having an outer court, an inner court, and a holy of holies. Into this last, to the great amusement of the natives, the Seths themselves were not allowed to enter.

The entire building must have covered an area of many acres; it would be more correct to say that the outer walls enclosed that space, for the interior consisted chiefly of courtyards and corridors. In the curious way in which the Hindoos combine pleasure and devotion, the building was at once a place of worship, a country house, and a caravanserai. Pilgrims were accommodated at one end, the Seths resided at the other, while the services went on in the courts between. There was a magnificent expanse of stone and marble pavement, fountains, ponds, and, if I remember rightly, a garden and an aviary. I have a distinct recollection of some very brilliant plumaged cockatoos.

The story of the erection of this temple is so illustrative of Hindoo manners, that at the risk of being tedious I will relate it. Swâmee Rungacharee was a Fukkeer of the Deccan, where having, according to scandal, ruined his patron, he came to seek his fortune in the north-west. He entered Muttra in rags on a miserable pony. Somehow he got introduced to Radha Kishen, the younger

Seth, and soon acquired unlimited influence over him. Presently the temple began to arise; rumour credited Radha Kishen with the erection. The elder Seth, who did not at all care for the money to go that way, spoke to his brother. Radha Kishen assured him that the funds were provided by a rich banker in the south. The elder Seth was not satisfied. He made inquiries, and he felt sure he was being deceived; he spoke to his brother again, and implored him to tell the truth. Radha Kishen had by this time got into a mess with his accounts; he confessed the facts, and made over the building to his brother, who was good-natured enough to finish it for him, at the expense, according to popular rumour, of a million of pounds; but he assured me that the actual cost was less than half this sum. Perhaps, however, he understated the expenditure, being a little ashamed of it; and I do not know if he included in it his own apartments, and the ornaments of the shrine. Among these latter was a lofty flagstaff, overlaid with gold plates to the value of thirty thousand pounds.

The elder Seth was an entire unbeliever; he lived much at the temple but cared nothing for the shrine. For the chief priest, the Swâmee Rungacharee, he entertained a great contempt—he was very free in expressing it.

'Look at that woman,' he remarked to a Christian friend as they passed the priest's wife; 'she has a lac of rupees' worth of jewels on her, and her husband pretends to have abandoned the world!'

The Seth's opinion of the priest was that generally entertained. He was regarded very much as an impostor, and his patron as a dupe.

When not at the temple the elder Seth resided mostly in a bungalow in the cantonments, where he had a lathe

and a printing press, and once nearly caused a pestilence by burying an elephant. He was fond of travelling, a very unusual taste in a native, and was now absent on a tour in Rajpootana. He left the management of the business to his brothers, who in their turn confided it to their agents. A few years before, one of these had led them into speculations in opium, that entailed on them a loss of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. The agents were allowed a liberty, and assumed an independence to our English notions very astounding. The one at Bombay was then in open rebellion; his revolt did not result in his dismissal, but in preventing the elder Seth from visiting that city as he had intended.

The Seths' house contained hardly any furniture, beyond curtains and awnings, nor any books, pictures, or other works of art. But of jewels they possessed a vast abundance, and stores of gold and silver that filled vaults. They had necklaces of emeralds, each stone the size of a large marble, enormous pearls, a ring of which the hoop and signet were cut out of a single ruby, a table diamond about an inch and a half long and of proportionate width, and smaller stones without number. The most precious ornaments were reserved for the women, and these I never saw; among them was a small idol carved out of a single emerald.

On state occasions their elephant appearedcaparisoned in silver; the caparison was composed of discs overlapping each other, something in the style of scale armour. They usually rode in English carriages, of which they had several. These vehicles were kept in open sheds and rarely, if ever, cleaned; neither were their horses. For dirt and untidiness the equipage of a native has no equal.

I have said that the Seths had no books; the elder

brother had one, oddly enough the first volume of a Koran. It had been obtained from the plunder of the palace of some Mohammedan prince, in one of our many wars. I once saw it. It was beyond compare the most beautiful manuscript I ever beheld; each letter had round it a border of gold. It must have taken a life-time to write. It was the Seth's great desire to obtain the other volume; he did not succeed in procuring it.

My life in the Seths' house would form an interesting story, but I shall not now relate it; the description would too much interrupt the course of my narrative. We had many adventures, some escapes. Once some Sepoy mutineers entered the city, twice the Seths' guards attempted to murder us. The villagers, after an interval, recommenced their aggressions. I collected a rabble, marched out, and burnt some of their villages; others it was prudent to avoid. Over the river several villages coalesced, and under the leadership of one Dayby Sing proclaimed their independence. Dayby Sing assumed the title of Rajah, and having attacked and subdued some of his neighbours, expressed his intention of turning me out of the city. At this juncture there arrived to my assistance a miniature army, termed the 'Kotah Contingent,' Captain Dennys commanding it.

The contingent arrived in the morning, in the afternoon the villagers sent in to make their submission; next day the contingent was recalled to Agra. The villagers heard of its departure, and shot at the messengers who conveyed my answer. The news reached Dayby Sing. I had put together the bridge of boats that we might march over and attack him. He learnt that the contingent was gone, he sent me a message to remove the bridge or he would save me the trouble by coming and burning it. That message cost him his life. I had

intended to remove the bridge lest he should use it to cross, but after this message I felt bound to maintain it. In a few days the contingent returned as unexpectedly as it had left, and the bridge being ready, Captain Dennys resolved to make a dash over the river, and, if possible, to capture the Rajah. I joined the force, which had encamped on one of the parade grounds, and about one o'clock the next morning we commenced our march.

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CHAPTER XII.

A VILLAGE RAJAH.

AFTER a fatiguing march of many miles we arrived before Dayby Sing's stronghold. It was an ordinary village, large and very ugly, a mere collection of mud huts closely huddled together. It stood on the open plain, but the plain was prettily dotted with groves of trees. The sun was high in the heavens before we reached it, for there had been a great delay in crossing the river, and we had stopped on the way to burn another insurgent village, from which the inhabitants had fled. We made sure that Dayby Sing and his men had done the same, for they must have had ample notice of our approach. In case, however, they should be inside and intend to fight, Captain Dennys thought it right to proceed with due caution. We halted, the men formed in line, the cavalry galloped off to right and left to cut off the fugitives, and then the guns were ordered to the front; and for the first time in my life I saw shots fired in earnest.

I was standing close by one of the cannon when there came a deafening roar, a jet of flame, and a puff of smoke. In a second or two there appeared in the air, as if it had come out of vacancy, a black ball sailing majestically, and, as it seemed, very deliberately towards the village. When it was just above the houses it burst, sending out a sheet of flame and a shower of fragments in all

directions. A second shell exploded inside the village. When the smoke had cleared, we perceived crowds of men and women making their way across the fields, and more streaming out from the village to follow them. As soon as they were well away the cavalry closed in, cut off their return, and then drove them in groups towards us. In half an hour the whole population had been made prisoners and were seated around us. The shells had terribly frightened them, but by good luck had injured none of them. Among the prisoners, to our surprise, was discovered Dayby Sing, the insurgent Rajah himself. He was a very ordinary-looking man, distinguished from the other villagers only by his yellow dress—yellow among the Hindoos being the dress of royalty.

He had been found hid in a field of sugar cane. He at first denied his identity, but a score of his subjects deposed to it, as also did his wife. She, with a number of other women, had been apprehended while flying in a different direction. On searching Dayby Sing's clothes a letter was found, the reading of which afforded much amusement, to the Sepoys especially. It was from his agent, a fellow-villager, and dated from a neighbouring town. It commenced with the usual string of adulatory epithets which Eastern etiquette demands in addresses to those of exalted rank. 'To the lord of beneficence, the source of wealth, the foundation of prosperity, the treasury of grace, the supporter of the poor, the illustrious prince, the Rajah, the great Rajah Dayby Sing, monarch of the fourteen villages, the victorious in war.'

The subject of the letter was hardly in keeping with its grandiloquent commencement. It reported only the purchase of a few pennyworths of pepper and about an equal amount of sugar and vegetables.

While the letter was being read the poor Rajah sat

on the ground cross-legged, and looking so miserable and forlorn that for all his misdeeds I could not help feeling sorry for him. His fellow-countrymen showed him less compassion, treating him to many taunts and jeers, as they did also his wife. They made her mock salaams, addressed her in ridicule as 'Queen' and 'her Highness,' and otherwise made fun of her. As soon, however, as the officers perceived this, they at once put a stop to it, and Captain Dennys had the poor woman removed to a distance, till we decided what to do with her and the other prisoners.

A party of men were now sent into the village; on their reporting it empty, orders were given to set it on fire. We were watching the flames, when, to our horror, we perceived a party of men on the flat roof of one of the houses. The flames were rapidly approaching them. We shouted, and Captain Dennys sent a party of tent-pitchers to their assistance. Their danger was more apparent than real, the house was on the margin of the village. Before the relieving party reached them they had leaped off the roof, and we presently, to our satisfaction, saw them scampering away across the fields.

The Sepoys had beheld the peril of their countrymen with great indifference. They exhibited, however, a lively interest in that of a pretty white cow, which, having escaped from the village, appeared inclined to run back to it. They shouted, gesticulated, appealed to the animal not to rush on to its fate, and till it had turned and run off in another direction they were wild with excitement. When the village was consumed, that is, when the thatches were burnt, for nothing else was combustible, we continued our march. Dayby Sing and the prisoners who had been found in arms we carried with us, the rest and the women we released. We marched

for another hour, and then arrived at a small town, the capital of that part of the district. Here we remained till the surrounding country had been brought to order. During my stay there I became acquainted with Dayby Sing's history and proceedings. They are so illustrative of native habits and of the condition of the country at the time, that an account of them may perhaps even now prove interesting to the reader.

The fourteen villages had, in times gone by, formed a single estate. During the half century of our rule they had been sold and resold, and the proprietors reduced to the condition of mere cultivators. But they still held the tradition of their former supremacy, and looked forward to the time when they might recover it. On the breaking out of the mutiny that time seemed to them to have arrived, and they hastened to avail themselves of it. In each village they rose and turned on the new owners; of these most fled, the rest fought. In these fights Dayby Sing came to the front. The proceedings on neither side were very heroic; there was much firing of matchlocks, a good deal of burning of thatch, a few men killed, more wounded. Eventually, Dayby Sing's fellow caste-men obtained the victory, re-established themselves in their ancient position, and, this done, Dayby Sing elected himself as their Rajah. He then turned his attention to his neighbours, to our Government, and to the Bunniahs.

The Bunniahs, as I have already explained, are a class of traders peculiar to India, at once dealers in grain, grocers, and money-lenders. In the latter capacity they are the most extortionate and pitiless usurers in the world. The leading Bunniahs in the neighbourhood resided in the town, where we were encamped. When Dayby Sing advanced to call them to account he had with him the sympathies of the entire population. This town

was also the head-quarters of the police. His first act was to eject them; it was easily effected—most of them, indeed, fled of their own accord on hearing of his approach. On entering the town Dayby Sing proceeded to the school-room, a building lately erected by our Government. In this he established his head-quarters, first tearing out the doors and windows. He then constituted a government of his own, which he formed on the English model.

He appointed a Board of Revenue, a Supreme Court of Judicature, a Commissioner, a Magistrate, and a Superintendent of Police. For this last office he did not consider any of his own people properly qualified; so he sent a message to the late incumbent begging him to return, and promising him an increase of salary. Having constructed his government, Dayby Sing was very diligent in superintending it. He came to the town every morning at daybreak, and sat himself down in the schoolroom. There he received petitions, heard complaints, and dictated despatches. This done, he devoted the rest of the day to plundering the Bunniahs, which he did very deliberately, all the town assisting.

Each morning one Bunniah was selected. He was conducted with his books to the schoolroom, and put through an examination, Dayby Sing first exhorting him very earnestly to speak the truth, to give up his bonds and mortgage deeds, and to point out his concealed treasures. If his replies were satisfactory, well and good; if they were not, he was put to the torture. The torments inflicted were not very severe; I found no case where any Bunniah had been seriously hurt.

Next followed an adjournment to the Bunniah's house—the afternoon was spent in pulling it to pieces. Whatever goods or treasure were found were distributed, account-books and papers were burnt, or torn to frag-

ments. The proceedings terminated by the release of the Bunniah. Like a cobra deprived of its poison bag, without his documents he was considered harmless.

By the time of our advance the Bunniahs had been nearly disposed of; the morning of our arrival Dayby Sing, having little other occupation, was amusing himself in robbing a mango orchard. He and his people were busy picking the fruit, when a man arrived and informed him that there was a column of smoke in the west, and that he feared something was wrong. He recommended the Rajah to return to his home. On this Dayby Sing set out for his village, and reached it only a little before our troops surrounded it.

Throughout the mutiny our intelligence was bad, but almost invariably that of the natives was worse. This was the result of their overwhelming conceit, their extreme apathy, and their childish credulity. Of this Dayby Sing was a fair example. Having driven out the police, he imagined that he had overthrown our government. On learning the recall of the contingent, he troubled himself no more about it. He was not aware of its return till he beheld the Sepoys before his village.

In the afternoon I visited the town. It was a pretty place, containing a long bazaar and several handsome houses. The bazaar, I should explain, is the principal street of an Indian town, in which are the shops and the market-places. Before his shop each trader was standing; as I entered, with one accord 'they lifted up their voices and wept.' Never before had I realised the force of the Scriptural expression.

Each commenced by shouting out his individual grievance, and calling on me and the 'Great Company' for vengeance and redress. To attract my attention they raised their voices higher and higher, till they

mingled in one loud discordant wail. They screamed, they yelled; some threw ashes on their heads, some beat their breasts, some tore their hair; they wept, they blubbered. No other word can so well express the sound; it was the vicious, revengeful cry of a cowardly schoolboy.

As men whose god was money they certainly had reason for their grief; every shop was completely plundered, and not only plundered but wrecked. The doors were torn out, the verandahs pulled down, the floors dug up, and also great holes dug in the walls. Whatever was worth carrying off had gone to the villages, the rest lay in the street. The roadway was covered with torn account-books, broken bottles, fragments of jars and boxes, besides the débris of the floors and verandahs.

Having seen the shops, I was led off to examine the dwelling-houses. Some of these were very pretty; walls solid as rocks, and delicate stone carving. They had been worse used than even the shops. In the search for hidden treasures the smaller ones had been nearly pulled to pieces; all of them were more or less reduced to ruins. I noticed here, as I had at Muttra, the excessive fondness of the villagers for wood and iron; not a fragment of either had been left that could be extracted. Here, as there, I was also struck with the disproportion between the value of the plunder and the labour of extracting it. Hours, even days, must have been spent in digging out of the solid walls ends of beams or fragments of clamps and hinges.

In the whole town only one house had escaped, and there the lamentations of the owner were the loudest. The mob had arrived to dig for his treasure, a carpenter stepped forward and said he would save them the trouble. He had just constructed a hiding-place for the proprietor, and he pointed it out. It was a small recess over

the doorway, concealed by a sliding beam. The recess was filled with silver rupees, gold mohurs, bags of copper coins, and the jewels of the family. The villagers took them and departed; they intended to return for a further exploration, but their intentions were frustrated by the arrival of the contingent.

Dayby Sing's career was brief, and in its incidents rather ludicrous; it might have been otherwise. With as small beginnings Indian dynasties have been founded. He was master of fourteen villages. Runjeet Sing commenced his conquests as lord of no more than twenty-five.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KOTAH CONTINGENT.

Our wars with the native princes had usually one of two terminations. We either annexed their territories, or we compelled them to maintain an addition to our armies. These new troops we raised, disciplined, and officered; the conquered sovereign defrayed their expenses. Being liable for general service, only under certain emergencies they received the name of contingents. Of this description was the force that Captain Dennys commanded. The officers of the different contingents were drawn from the line regiments. The transfer was accompanied by promotion or other advantages that caused it to be somewhat sought after.

The Kotah contingent had been sent to Muttra ostensibly to restore order, really that it might be outside Agra, and yet within call, till the authorities there could make up their minds about admitting it. Some of Mr. Colvin's advisers thought the force mutinous and better away. Others put faith in its loyalty, and wished it brought in to take the place of the disbanded regiments. The discussions on the matter were many and anxious; each party held to their opinions. Meanwhile, the contingent remained with me.

A detailed record of our proceedings would now be very uninteresting; I shall not attempt it. We remained

for some days at the little town where Dayby Sing had made his head-quarters. We recrossed the river, we came back again, and marched away to the east. Finally, by orders from the Government, we halted on the confines of the district at a spot not above sixteen miles from Agra—the contingent being held ready to march in there at a moment's notice.

While marching through the district, the contingent encamped on the open plain. We pitched our tents in some adjacent grove whenever there was one. The early mornings were occupied by the officers in parades and inspections; by me in interviews with natives, or in visiting the neighbouring villages. Visits it was seldom safe to pay, unless accompanied by a large retinue. About ten o'clock we assembled in the mess-tent and had breakfast. The meal over, and also the chat which followed it, Captain Dennys held a levée of his native officers, while I retired to my own tent and busied myself with what little work there was to do.

By noon the heat had become well-nigh intolerable. The sun's rays streamed through the dense foliage of the trees above us—not even the double canopies of the tent could exclude their glare, though each canopy was composed of many layers of cloth. The heat produced a nearly overpowering drowsiness; in spite of all my efforts I was at times unable to resist it. Often while writing or listening to a report, I would awake with a start, and find that unawares I had wandered into dream-land, and that my people were slumbering around me. About noon everyone—soldiers, servants, clerks, and camp-followers—lay down, in the shade if they could find any, if not in the open plain. They wrapt their heads in long cotton shawls, and slumbered till the sun was well on his downward course. A silence, a repose, greater

than that of midnight fell on the camp, the grove, and the country. No dog barked, no bird twittered, no insect flew or chirped. The leaves of the trees seemed to droop, the flowers to bend; the cattle lay asleep in the fields, the crows and the sparrows sat motionless with open beaks on the branches of the trees.

About four o'clock the sunlight began to assume a richer tint, and the camp and our servants awoke to life. We bathed, changed our clothes, and sat down to dinner. Dinner was followed by a chat beneath the trees. When the sun began to set, we left the grove and repaired to the camp; there we had our tea, and soon after darkness had set in we were reposing on our beds beneath an open awning. The night brought little coolness; it was often even more oppressively hot than the day. A cloud of dust obscured the skies; by the morning it had filled our hair and formed a thick layer over our beds and ourselves.

It was a curious life we led; very quiet, and yet full of excitement. We received few letters, no newspapers; except by vague report we heard little of what was going on beyond the horizon around us. This absence of news did not greatly trouble us. My interests were well-nigh absorbed in the district, that of Captain Dennys and his officers in their regiment. It was touching to see their confidence in their men, their pride in the fidelity they had as yet displayed, their trustfulness in their fidelity for the future. It was a confidence which I soon came to share, not from knowledge or conviction—simply from the effect of association. I had been warned against both the Sepoys and the troopers. The warnings which came from the most respectable and reliable of the natives had so far effected me, that on first joining the contingent I always went armed. At Captain Dennys' request,

and under the influence of his example, I ere long, like him and his officers, laid my arms aside. He said, 'If the men are loyal, weapons are unnecessary; if they mutiny, weapons will not avail us.' So he and his officers lived among their soldiers unarmed, defenceless, and what they did, so did all the other officers of the Indian army. I think now that in so doing they were mistaken, but surely history records little more calmly heroic.

The silence of the night was by no means so profound as that of the mid-day; the dogs barked, the insects chirped, and from the villages all around came the nearly continuous report of matchlocks, mingled with the deeper sounds of the gingals and ramjunnies. The first night this firing alarmed us, we thought it betokened some fighting, but I ascertained the next day that the villagers were discharging their guns, merely to let their neighbours know that they had firearms, and if need be could use them, as also to keep up their own courage.

Occasionally we heard sounds of firing in the daytime, but it was firing of a different kind—the dull boom of distant artillery. Where these sounds came from we could never ascertain; there were no armies near that possessed cannon; currents of air must have carried the reports from immense distances. The origin of one cannonading was, however, discovered to be nearer home. It would be thought that no two sounds could be more unlike than the report of a cannon, and the noise of a horse shaking himself; nevertheless, it is almost impossible to distinguish between this last sound and that of distant artillery.

Being now among the villages, I became better acquainted with the real condition of the country than I had been while residing in the native city. I found that

condition to be very different from what it was supposed to be by the officials at Agra. Where the contingent moved there was order, as also there was on the estates of the great proprietors, who had now re-established their authority; elsewhere it was anarchy. Village fought against village, caste against caste; disorder had reached a point that was sometimes ludicrous. For example, in one village two Rajahs established themselves; each assumed the yellow dress, each proclaimed his own independence, and each made war on the other.

The distant villages set the English Government at open defiance; the nearer ones, afraid of our cannon, were more cautious in expressing their feelings. They were profuse, indeed, in their declarations of loyalty, and avoided all acts of open disobedience, but they persistently evaded the payment of their revenue. It was the belief of the Government, and also of the English generally, that the natives were attached to our rule; and moreover that, weary of the present anarchy, they longed for the re-establishment of order. My present experience did not confirm this belief. No one regretted the loss of our rule; and, with the exception of the Bunniahs, who suffered by it, all classes enjoyed the confusion.

A large landholder once expressed his feelings to me very frankly. He said 'that the last three months had been the happiest of his life. He went about in state, and did what he liked; whom he would he punished, and whom he would he rewarded.' He added, 'that the English Government had been all very well at first. It gave the country protection against the Mahrattas, and did not too much interfere in their domestic matters. But lately it had meddled with everything, and upset all their ancient customs. Besides,' he continued, 'what with the heavy land revenue, the school rates, and all the

other new cesses, the taxation had become pretty well unbearable.'

In a large proprietor these sentiments were natural, but it was a little surprising to find that very similar sentiments were entertained by the peasant cultivators, and by that still lower class who, of all others, had especially benefited by our rule. Had I not myself witnessed it I should have deemed it incredible, but it is positively true that this class voluntarily returned to that condition of semi-serfdom from which it was the especial boast of our Government that it had freed them. At the same time there was re-established Suttee, domestic slavery, and all those other barbarous customs the abolition of which we had justly regarded as the chief glory of our rule, and as our best title to the gratitude of the people. It was evident that in its most humane and philanthropic efforts our Government had not been in harmony with the sentiments of the country.

After the lapse of a few years the people would no doubt have looked back to their condition under our rule with regretful appreciation, but just at present they were glad to be quit of it. They liked the freedom they were then enjoying—they liked the excitement; and, better than all, they liked paying no revenue, and wiping off old scores with the Bunniahs.

To a certain extent I could enter into their feelings. The change in the appearance of the country was even to a spectator very agreeable. From the monotony of modern civilisation it had reverted to the wildness, the picturesqueness that we associate with the feudal ages.

In every village fortifications sprang up, the grandees resumed their ancient state, surrounded themselves with troops of attendants, hosts of armed retainers. When

they appeared abroad, it was with cavalcades of beautiful horses, camels gaily caparisoned, and crowds of followers carrying swords and spears, and clothed in the brightest of dresses. Life was now for them full of poetry, full of romance—wondrous rumours, vague anticipations.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE APPROACH OF THE ENEMY.

ONE morning Captain Dennys received a despatch, directing him to intercept if possible a body of mutineers. We were at breakfast when the messenger arrived; before an hour had passed everything was packed and laden, and the contingent had commenced its march.

It was the hottest day I ever experienced, hotter even than that of my ride to Agra. The wind blew as if it issued from a furnace, clouds of dust obscured the sky, and filled the air; even the groves and villages on the roadside were but dimly visible. The burning heat and the blinding glare gave to the country something of a wintry aspect—the same gloom, the same appearance of desolation. The muffled figures of my attendants added to the resemblance. To protect themselves from the 'Loo,' as this fiery wind is termed, they had wrapped themselves in cloaks thickly wadded with cotton, enveloping their heads in enormous turbans. At their suggestion I had done the same; a picture of us and the landscape would have suggested rather the idea of wanderers in some Arctic waste, than of travellers in the fertile plains of India.

It may interest the reader to learn how the contingent appeared on the line of march. The description may also perhaps be useful to some future military his-

torian, for the Indian army, as it then existed, is a thing of the past. I started after the troops, and as I overtook them I first came up to the company of Sepoys that formed the rear-guard; beyond them was a line of camels, a line—I speak from memory—that must have stretched more than half a mile. The camels were in groups of twenty and thirty; a string through the nostril of each hinder one connected it to the tail of the one that preceded it. On some of the camels were laden tents, others carried great sacks hanging on either side, which were filled with the clothes of the Sepoys, their cooking pots, and other utensils. Some carried in similar fashion the trunks of the officers, and enormous sorts of panniers, termed 'kajarwahs,' in which were stowed the plate, china, stores, and other property belonging to the mess. On a few of the camels were laden small boxes, very strong and solid in appearance, and very carefully packed. These contained the ammunition, and also the treasure. They formed a group by themselves, and a special guard marched beside them.

The camel seen singly and near is an ugly brute enough, often vicious, and stupid to a proverb. Seen from a distance crossing the plain in a long file, they are among the most graceful of quadrupeds. Their slow solemn gait, their undulating motion, the flowing robes of their attendants, seem to embody the calmness, the poetry, and even the unchangeableness of the East. As they appear now on the plains of India, so did they long ago on those of Mamre and Bagdad. On such might Sindbad have returned with his treasures, or Eliezer brought home to Isaac his bride.

Beyond the camels were the infantry. They marched in a long column. Passing them we came on the artillery. It consisted of two guns, each mounted on a

carriage very much resembling a waggon without sides or cover, and each carriage was drawn by six horses, and on the near horse of each pair sat an artilleryman. Behind each gun came another carriage, also very much resembling a sideless waggon. These carried the ammunition, and were also drawn each by six horses. In military phraseology these carriages were termed tumbrels. Across the centre of each carriage was fastened a spare wheel; its upper half stood up in the form of an arch, and presented a very formidable, and to the uninitiated a very puzzling, appearance. The guns and tumbrels were followed by a number of two-wheeled carts, each drawn by a pair of fine white bullocks. The gun-carriages, tumbrels, and carts were of the plainest construction, but most massive build. They were painted a dark blue, nearly approaching lead, colour. On each gun-carriage and tumbrel were seated several artillerymen, dressed in a plain uniform of dark blue. With the exception of the head-gunner, they were all natives. The traces were of chains, and the rest of the harness of the strongest and thickest leather.

Beyond the artillery were more infantry, also marching in column. After passing them we came on the cavalry. They were mounted on beautiful horses, and with their loose scarlet dresses and white turbans they presented a very gay and picturesque appearance. Before the cavalry marched the advanced guard, and with them rode Captain Dennys.

The dress of the cavalry was not only very picturesque, but was also equally convenient. It was perfectly adapted both to the climate and the requirements of the wearers. The same could not be said of the uniform of the infantry; except in colour, it was that of our English soldiers; but beneath their trousers

the Sepoys wore, wrapped round and round their loins, cotton shawls several yards in length, which caused the trousers to bulge out awkwardly at the hips, and also much impeded the movements of the wearers.

It gave me a high opinion of Captain Dennys' good sense that he permitted his men to march in their 'dhoties,' as these cotton shawls are termed. It was a concession to reason that some commanders of that day would have risked disaster rather than have been guilty of. After marching some miles we came to a well. Both men and animals were parched with thirst. Captain Dennys called a halt, and some of the Sepoys advanced to draw water. One of them let down a brass pot. As he drew it up a crowd rushed forward to drink. The first that touched the water threw it from him with an exclamation of disgust. On looking into the well a human corpse in an advanced state of decomposition was seen floating on the surface of the water. The finding dead bodies was then a common incident, and formed a sad reverse to that other picture of the state of the country which I have given above. Who they were or how they came by their fate it was useless to inquire, impossible to ascertain. They may have been murdered travellers, the victims of private revenge, or villagers who had fallen in their mutual affrays. They were a ghastly illustration of the lawlessness that prevailed.

The fiery winds did not much longer continue. They were succeeded by a still heat, even more oppressive. This heat presaged the arrival of the rainy season. It commenced very suddenly. We were encamped on the side of the high road, which ran from Agra to Allyghur. Near the camp was a small bungalow; in it we had our meals and at night I slept, for I had become very distrustful of the Sepoys. We had finished dinner, and I

and Captain Dennys were sitting in the verandah. The sky was thick with dust and the air motionless—hot and stifling as that of the Black Hole. Looking towards the horizon, it seemed to us as if the bank of dust was becoming thicker, and that real clouds were mingled with it. As we gazed there came a movement in the atmosphere, and presently a gentle wind began to blow cool and fresh, as if it had come through water. As the wind blew the bank of dust advanced towards us; it rose, spread; in a few minutes the heavens were concealed by a canopy of rolling clouds. Presently there came a flash of lightning, a crash of thunder, and then the floodgates of the heavens were opened, and the rain descended—at first in heavy single drops, then in streams.

For two hours it continued to pour. When it ceased the face of nature was changed. The dust had gone, the clouds had vanished; we gazed on a sky of azure brightness; the sun as it descended sank in a bed of gold. Then followed that beautiful phenomenon so rarely witnessed in northern climes. The setting rays traversing the firmament met again on the eastern horizon, giving the idea of an evening sunrise. As the rain fell a delicious coolness pervaded the air. It woke up the camp and all nature to life and enjoyment. The Sepoys in their delight romped like children. They ran over the plain, wetting themselves in the falling streams; they chatted, laughed; in all their movements they showed their delight at the change in the season. As night came on the frogs also, by their incessant croaking, gave evidence that the arrival of the rains was to them equally agreeable. It had aroused them, not altogether to our satisfaction, from the torpor in which, buried in the mud, they had passed the hot weather. To us English the change was like a renewal of existence.

More showers but slighter followed. In two days, so energetic in these climates are the forces of nature, the whole aspect of the country was changed. Over the bare earth the grass had sprung up. The dust no longer obscured the air; above us was a sky of the clearest blue; we gazed around on a plain of verdant green. But in this life every change has its drawbacks. The frogs were not the only creatures that the rains aroused to activity or called into existence. At night in place of the dust millions of insects filled the air, each of a kind more detestable than the other. The light of a candle attracted them like a magnet. If the doors were left open swarms of white ants alighted on the table, covering its surface, and filling our tea-cups with their wings as they dropped them. Moths and cockchafers fluttered about the room, or dashed at the candles, and flying bugs entangled themselves in our hair, perfuming it with their sickly odour. Occasionally they flew into our eyes, or got entrapped, as we drank our tea, in our mouths. These last accidents I even now shudder to recall.

All the insects were not, however, so disagreeable. The fireflies, though there were not many of them, added to the beauty of the night, and by day the whole surface of the ground was dotted with a lovely little crimson insect, whose scientific appellation I do not know, but which is termed by the natives the 'bheerbootie.' Varying in size from that of an apple pip to that of a large pea, it resembles nothing so much, when seen on the ground, as a moving bit of the richest red velvet. A day or two after the commencement of the rains these insects appear in millions—rather, I should say, in millions of millions, for over the whole extent of Upper India one may be seen in every square foot. For a few

days they continue moving all the while continually. Then they burrow beneath the surface, and for another year are seen no more.

The advent of the rains put the whole camp, men and officers, into good spirits. In a day or two the officers were further elated by the arrival of a letter, ordering the contingent into Agra. To explain the reasons for the issuing of this order it will be necessary to describe the events that had been taking place in other parts of the country. As I have no intention of writing a history of the mutiny, I shall make my description the briefest possible.

The mutiny, as the reader may remember, first broke out at Meerut. The mutineers marched to Delhi, combined with the Sepoy regiments there, and, entering the palace, placed the titular king on the throne. As the news of this event reached the various cantonments scattered over Upper India, the native regiments followed the example thus set them. Sooner or later they also revolted. Most of them proceeded to Delhi; the rest remained where they were. The revolt of the army was followed or accompanied by a rebellion of the country. In the course of a month, from the frontiers of Bengal to those of the Punjab, our empire had melted away. The authority of the English Government was acknowledged only for a few miles round Agra, and in some other isolated spots where there happened to be English regiments stationed. Elsewhere there was anarchy.

The situation was this. Our army of Sikhs and English was besieging Delhi, a handful of English were entrenched at Cawnpore, and a small garrison shut up in the Residency at Lucknow. At Meerut the English troops had also entrenched themselves. At Agra the

Government was awaiting the course of events, and awaiting them in much anxiety, for we were there in a situation of great peril. A few marches to the south-west was the state of Gwalior. The Rajah was friendly, but the contingent had lately mutinied. It was a formidable force, numbering about ten thousand men, and regarded as the finest and best disciplined body of troops in the whole Bengal army. It had expressed an intention of marching on Agra. The prime minister of the Rajah had dissuaded the leaders from carrying out their intention, but it was uncertain if he would in the future be able to restrain them.

Another army also threatened us. This was the native brigade that had been stationed at Neemuch, a city far away to the west, in the territory of Rajpootana. It had mutinied like the rest, and after plundering the treasury had commenced to march, it was supposed, for Delhi. But on this point doubts had for some time arisen. The route they had taken would lead equally to Agra, and it was now uncertain if, after all, Agra was not really their destination. The uncertainty was causing all at Agra great anxiety, not a little apprehension; for if this rebel army did come we had but a very small force wherewith to meet it. After much debate, much hesitation, the Government had at length decided to increase their forces by calling in the Kotah contingent, and the order was issued that caused Captain Dennys and his officers so great gratification. Their gratification was a little modified by a second order, which almost immediately followed, and which forbade the contingent to cross the river. Captain Dennys was directed to remain encamped on the eastern bank of the Jumna till the destination of the Neemuch mutineers was positively ascertained.

The contingent marched away in the morning; I followed in the afternoon. I had collected some revenue. I thought, now that the contingent were leaving, it would be safer in Agra. I obtained permission to bring it in.

It was not so very long since I had been at Agra, but in the interval a great change had occurred in the sentiments of the higher officials. There was little of the former confidence, less of that disbelief in the danger, now that it threatened themselves. The conviction of the danger did not, however, appear to have called forth either much wisdom or much unanimity as to the method of meeting it. I heard the arrangements discussed. They seemed to me very foolish; but on this point the reader will be able to form his own opinion when later on I describe them.

I returned to my district the next day, bringing back with me one of my assistants, Mr. Clifford. He had been ill, and though hardly recovered insisted on returning and sharing our dangers. I will hurry over the events of the next few days. Anticipating the departure of the contingent, I had collected a force of my own. It was supplied by the great landholders; each sent in a party of so many men. Wonderful savages they were; lazy, dirty, stupid, and armed with as miscellaneous a collection of weapons as if they had plundered a museum. The way they performed their duties would have broken the heart of a disciplinarian. They had no conception of order or of obedience. As guards, even as messengers, they were quite unreliable. They would sleep at their posts, or, if the fancy took them, would desert them. A letter delivered to one, however urgent, would be passed on to a second or to a third. It would be delayed whilst the man who ultimately took

it ate, smoked, or visited a friend by the way. Of such mobs, no doubt, were composed the armies of the native princes that we encountered in the early days of our rule. No wonder that with such mere handfuls of troops we so easily defeated them.

The horsemen, however, were much better. They were men of a superior class, generally connected more or less nearly to the landholder who furnished them. They were well dressed, well armed in the native fashion, and mounted on really beautiful horses. I collected a large troop of these men. They were afterwards transferred to the Government, and, under the appellation of De Kantzow's horse, did good service towards the end of the disturbances.

Bad as my levies were, they were as good as the villagers'. I could have maintained my position in the district with them had I not been threatened by more dangerous enemies.

CHAPTER XV.

CLOSING AROUND US.

SOME ten or twelve miles further down the road, on the side of which I was encamped, there was a detachment of native cavalry and horse artillery. They formed a portion of that Gwalior contingent which, as I have stated, had recently mutinied. It was daily expected that this detachment would do the same. When they did we should have to fly, and for that contingency I had made all preparation. I had also, should things come to the worst, endeavoured to procure the means of defence, and with that object I had applied to the Government for some muskets and a few rounds of ammunition. I was told that none could be spared, but in their place the Government sent me a fresh troop of this mutinous cavalry. They were to be under my immediate orders; how likely they were to obey them might be conjectured from their behaviour on their arrival.

They marched in at dawn; their native officers came to report themselves; I had been up late, and was asleep. 'The Sahib (gentleman) is asleep, is he?' they replied to the servant; 'then we will try and awaken him,' and so saying they walked into the verandah and discharged their pistols before my bedroom door.

It was about the third day after the arrival of this

troop that I received a note from Captain Alexander, who commanded the detachment down the road, to warn me that his men were about to mutiny. Between nine and ten in the evening, just as we were going to bed, we heard a tremendous hubbub in the yard of the bungalow. Mr. Clifford and I seized our guns and ran out; we found the yard filled with our servants in a state of great excitement, and we could perceive indistinctly a party of horsemen on the road beyond. We concluded that the detachment had mutinied and were come to attack us. We were going to run back to the bungalow and try to defend ourselves, when I heard myself called to in English, and I recognised the voice as Captain Alexander's; he begged me to come to the roadside and speak to him.

I found him on horseback, his officers beside him, and a party of troopers behind. In a few words he informed me that his detachment had mutinied, as he had expected, but that a number of the men had insisted that their officers should not be injured, and had told off some of their number to see them safe into Agra. He said that he had halted to inform me, and recommended that I and Mr. Clifford should accompany him. I should have done so but for my assistants at Muttra, Mr. Dashwood and Mr. Colvin, whom I could not in honour abandon. I should have stated that they and also the civil surgeon had lately returned to Muttra, and were residing in a bungalow I had had put in order for them. I informed Captain Alexander why I could not avail myself of his proposal, and then we shook hands and the troop rode on. Had he not told me so, I should never have supposed that the men were mutineers. While we were conversing they had remained as silent, as orderly, and as respectful as the most obedient of soldiers.

The reader may remember that when the Bhurtpore army mutinied, Mr. Harvey and the other English had set off for Delhi, while I and Mr. Joyce returned to Muttra. Things had fallen out with them as I had predicted; they did not succeed in reaching Delhi, nor even in crossing the Jumna; but after enduring much hardship and discomfort, and facing not a little danger, they had done what at the first I recommended them to do, and made their way back to Muttra and Agra, where sooner or later they all arrived in safety. To Muttra I and Mr. Clifford now intended to return, for with the mutineer detachment so near us it would have been very unsafe to remain longer where we were.

My preparations had long been made; nevertheless, there was some delay in getting the bullocks for our carts, for by some oversight they had been allowed to go into the little town near which we were encamped. However, before midnight we had commenced our march. I had considerable apprehension that my troop of cavalry might stop our passage, for the road ran very near where they were quartered. Thanks, perhaps, to the darkness, we got by them in safety. The rest of the journey was simply fatiguing. About an hour after sunrise we reached the banks of the Jumna; the crossing the river was a tedious business, for it was swollen by the rains to a broad stream. It was past noon before we reached the bungalow where Mr. Dashwood and the others were residing; our followers and the main part of our baggage did not arrive till the following morning. So soon as they had crossed, I had all the boats in the neighbourhood brought to this side of the river; this done I felt secure, for there was half a mile of water between us and the mutineers, should they have any intention of following us.

This feeling of security did not, however, continue long; I found that in escaping one danger we had exposed ourselves to another—and a worse. I received a letter from Agra telling me that the rebel army was advancing, and that the women and children had been sent into the fort. The next news was that the Kotah contingent had been called across the river, which news was almost immediately followed by a report that they had mutinied and joined the rebels. The next information came from the rebels themselves, in the shape of a letter to the Seths directing them to prepare supplies for their army, which they might expect to arrive at Muttra in the course of a day or two. Very soon after I received intelligence that some of their cavalry had been seen hovering about in the neighbourhood.

The rebel army on one side the river, and the mutineer detachment on the other, our situation was indeed precarious. We should have left for Agra while the road was still open, only that I awaited the orders of the Government; none came, they seemed to have forgotten our existence. The next afternoon news was brought me that a body of cavalry had been seen within a few miles of the station. On this I thought we had best retreat into the city; I sent in some of my servants with a message to the Seths; at sunset we ourselves followed.

We drove through the same streets that I had passed along on my return from Agra; they were as densely crowded, but the demeanour of the people was very different; they were quite respectful, and generally saluted us with salaams. The Seths were absent at their country house, but their servants had made all preparations for our reception. We were conducted to the apartment I had formerly occupied; it was arranged just as we had left it. The return to our old residence

brought back to me and Mr. Joyce many reminiscences. The other members of our party were differently affected. Residence in a native dwelling was to them, as it had been to us, a new experience; they were regarding their surroundings with the same interest and curiosity.

We were seated on the terrace, when the manager was announced; he wished to speak to me at once, and alone; I left the terrace, and returned to the apartment. When the servants had retired, the manager rose, he walked round the room and examined each door. Having satisfied himself that no one was listening, he drew his chair to mine, and whispered that his masters had just received intelligence that the rebel army had left their encampment, and were in full march to Agra. The news had reached them at their country house; they had sent to him at once to warn me. Whilst the manager was speaking, the Seths themselves entered. They repeated a good deal of what he had informed me; they ended by begging me and my party to fly at once. They assured me that if the rebel army came nearer they would be powerless to protect us; our presence would merely involve us and themselves in common destruction. That they believed what they said their agitation sufficiently showed.

That we must fly was clear; the question was, where. I called in my companions to consult; we decided to make for Agra. The next question was, whether we should go by land or by water. I had had a boat prepared and moored below the Seths' house; the rest of the party proposed that we should enter it, and drop down the river. It seemed to me safer to go by land. I thought the road would be still open, while there was great danger that the boat might ground on a shoal or drift under the bank and be shot at by the villagers.

We debated the matter anxiously; each held to his own opinion. I then said that if they desired it I would accompany them. They one and all replied that if I thought the road the safest they would not hinder me from taking it, but they begged me, for my own sake, not to do so, for in their opinion it would be rushing on destruction.

While discussing the matter, we had adjourned to the terrace; I now returned to the room to make my preparations. By this time it had become dark; a servant brought a candle. By its light I commenced to change my English clothes for a native dress, which long ago, anticipating some such necessity, I had had made, and always kept by me. The room was long and low; the single candle faintly illumined the part where I stood, the rest was in deep shadow. I had nearly completed my change of costume, when, happening to look towards the end of the room, I perceived that it was full of people. As I looked they came forward, and I recognised my attendants and the heads of my office. The news of our intended departure had got abroad, for in a native household nothing is long kept secret; they had come to inquire if it was true. I told them our intentions, and then I asked them to answer me faithfully whether they thought that in going by land I was doing wisely. Among my attendants was an old man; he had served the Government from his boyhood. As I spoke he stooped down, clasped my knees, and raising his face, he implored me not to set foot in the boat.

'On your horse,' he said, 'you can ride to the right or to the left, but once in the boat you can go only where the stream may carry you;' and he then pointed out the dangers of the river nearly exactly as I had described them to my companions.

While he was speaking Mr. Joyce hurriedly entered. He had been absent during the discussion, and had only just heard of my intention of going by land. He came to ask my permission to accompany me.

'We have shared,' he said, 'so many dangers together that I should not like you to face this one alone.'

I was only too glad of his companionship. I had the utmost reliance on his courage and presence of mind, and he spoke the language and understood the natives far better than I did. Mr. Joyce then proceeded to follow my example, and to put on the native dress which he also had by him. We then put on our arms, tied long purses full of rupees round our waists, and put some biscuits in our pockets. Our toilets being now completed, I tested our disguise by sending for our companions. We were so well got up that, till we spoke, they did not recognise us.

Two hours had passed in preparations and deliberations; the boat was ready below, my horses and escort were waiting outside at the gate. It was high time we were leaving, but the Seths had promised me some additional men and also spare riding horses, in case ours should knock up, and these had not yet arrived. I was thinking of starting without them, when the Seths returned to wish me good-bye. They applauded my determination to go by land, promised to send for the horses and men immediately, and took their leave with many invocations to the Almighty for my safety. I noticed that both the brothers were much agitated, the younger Seth especially. At times he could hardly speak for trembling. His agitation struck me as singular, but I was too much occupied about my own departure to give it much attention.

The horses and escort still did not come. I sent

message after message, always receiving the same reply, that they would arrive immediately. There was a great bustle in the yard below, and it seemed to me that the house was in some confusion. I resolved to wait no longer. My companions accompanied us to the head of the stairs, made a last attempt to dissuade us from going by land, and then we bade each other farewell, like those who, on this earth, might not meet again.

At the barricade our horses were drawn up, behind them were our men. I noticed also some men of the Seths', who informed me that they were to accompany us to the outside of the city. I attributed this attention to politeness. I afterwards learnt, as I shall relate, that it was due to other reasons. As we were wishing good-bye to our servants and office people there was a slight movement behind, the crowd opened, and the two Seths appeared. They had come, they said, to bid us again farewell, and to see us safely depart.

Just then two more horsemen rode up—a neighbouring landholder and his son. I had lately done him some kindness. He said that he wished to show his sense of it by accompanying us to Agra. I was glad of his company, for two more men were a welcome addition to our party, especially men such as these, in whom I thought I could place confidence.

The Seths were anxious for us to wait for the additional escort and the spare horses, which they assured us were now approaching. But of this I did not feel confident, nor, if we were to reach Agra before morning, was it prudent to delay our departure. I was armed with sword and revolver; I had also a dagger and three guns. I gave one of the guns to the chief of my horsemen, old Dillawar Khan, and the other two to the landholder and his son, and desired them to ride close beside. I then

wished good-bye to the Seths, thanking them for all their kindness, and having done so Mr. Joyce and I passed through the wicket. I remembered afterwards that the Seths took extreme precautions for our safety as we did so, keeping close beside us, and placing some of their most confidential servants on the other side. Having passed the wicket we mounted our horses, and I gave the word to proceed.

CHAPTER XVI.

A MIDNIGHT RIDE.

I AND Mr. Joyce rode side by side, two men in advance, the remainder following in double file. It was nearly full moon, but the sky was concealed by a canopy of clouds too thick for its rays to penetrate; as we advanced beyond the space illuminated by the glare of the torches we plunged into darkness.

The streets were silent and deserted; their silence impressed us with a feeling of awe. It seemed but a few minutes since we had seen them full of life. The houses on either side were dimly visible. The canopy of clouds seemed to rest on their summits, giving to the street the appearance of a covered passage. We passed one or two watchmen, who challenged us. The men in advance replied that we were horsemen of the Government going to patrol the road. On reaching the city gates the same explanation was given. The sentry knew the men; he opened the gate and let us pass without further inquiry. It was with a feeling of relief that we found ourselves again in the open country. We were no longer as it were in a cage, and, whatever happened, we could at least make a run for our lives. It presently began to rain—the falling rain cooled the air. I took advantage of the coolness to put our horses to a canter, which we continued till we reached the cantonments. At the

corner of the road that ran up to the gaol was a shed, where I had lately stationed a body of police for the purpose of patrolling the roads. As we approached the shed we pulled up our horses, and proceeded at a walk, keeping on the side of the road where the surface was soft and the tramp of the horses would least resound. The precaution was unnecessary. As we passed the station no one challenged us, nor could we discern the form of any sentry. The guard were either asleep or had run away.

We now pushed on again, but this time at a trot. The rain continued falling, and refreshed both ourselves and our horses. I had been very sleepy at starting; the cool air and the motion had by this time quite aroused me. Both I and Mr. Joyce felt more cheerful now that we were well outside the city, and very confident that we should safely make our way to Agra.

We presently approached the village of Aurungabad. Mr. Joyce and I were well disguised, but before we entered the village Dillawar Khan thought it would be prudent to halt and rearrange our party, so that we should occupy the centre, and thus, as far as was possible, be concealed from observation. At the entrance of the village was a police-station, the same where we had rested on our flight from Hodul. As we passed the sentry challenged us: our men made some reply which satisfied him. He let us proceed without further questioning. The high road runs through the village; on either side were shops. They were all closed, but through the chinks of some of the shutters came the feeble rays of little lamps, showing that the owners were still awake and examining their account-books. Otherwise there was no sign of life—the village was buried in silence and darkness.

At the further end of the village stood a stable, where

two horsemen were stationed. I had sent on a man in advance, to desire them to get ready and accompany me. When we arrived at the stable we halted, and I called to the horsemen to come out. They did not appear, and, from the sounds that issued from the stable yard, there seemed to be some discussion going on between them and the man I had sent to warn them. There was no time to ascertain what the dispute was about. I told the man to come out of the yard and fall in; and desiring the two horsemen to follow and join us, we moved on, passed through the ruined gateway, and came again into the open country.

The rain had now ceased to fall, and, though it was still extremely dark, there were occasional breaks in the clouds, through which the moonlight faintly shone. These breaks made us anxious, for in India, when the clouds begin to break, the sky often clears with great rapidity. In the bright moonlight it might be perceived that Mr. Joyce and I were not natives.

All along the road, at short intervals, I had stationed parties of police; they had received the strictest orders to patrol the road incessantly, and only the previous day they had made the most solemn promises to do so. Of the value of these promises, and also of the attention paid to those orders, I had now experience. Since leaving Muttra we had not met a single patrol, nor had we been challenged at any one of the stations.

We had ridden on for some time, when Mr. Joyce called my attention to a point in the sky, on the horizon to our left. I looked in the direction to which he pointed, and through a break in the clouds I perceived a dull light. Mr. Joyce asked me what I thought the light could be. From the tone of his voice I perceived that he was anxious. I looked again and more attentively. The light appeared to come from behind the river, and

to proceed, so I thought, from some burning village. Such sights had of late been too common to cause surprise; Mr. Joyce did not appear satisfied with my explanation. He asked me if I did not think that the light came from the direction of Agra. I thought not—it was too much to the left; besides, we were thirty miles from Agra, and in so flat a country no light would be visible at that distance.

To this last remark Mr. Joyce assented, but, nevertheless, in a tone as if he was still not entirely convinced. The clouds then closed again, shut out the light, and put an end to our discussion. We rode on in silence.

We had ridden on for half a mile or so, when we heard behind us the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the tinkling of a bell; we halted, and were presently joined by a further party of their horsemen whom the Seths had sent after us. These were the men for whom we had waited. They had arrived at the Seths' house soon after we left, and had been desired by their masters to follow us. With them had come also some more of my horsemen, and a camel rider of the Seths'. It was the bell attached to the camel's neck whose tinkling we had heard.

These men were a welcome addition to our party. They raised it to over forty persons; a number quite sufficient to repel any attack from the villagers, and to force our way through any straggling body of mutineers we might happen to encounter.

We now approached a village named Badh. As the inhabitants bore an evil reputation we advanced to it with all precaution. At the end of the village a small picket of horse had been recently stationed. Their duty was to patrol the road. We found them all in the guard-house and fast asleep. I had them awoke, and desired them to saddle their horses and accompany us.

Instead of obeying they began to make excuses. There was no time to argue; I desired them to follow us, and rode on.

Since the rain had ceased we had mostly walked our horses, for fear of distressing them. The rain now commenced to fall again, and heavier than before. The air became cool, we put our horses to a canter. After four miles or so the road made a sudden bend, and we found ourselves, as well as we could make out, on an open plain, slightly raised above the surrounding country. Casting my eyes along it, I noticed again the same light to which Mr. Joyce had before called my attention. As I was speculating what it could be, Mr. Joyce rode up close beside me, and asked me if I had noticed that the light still continued; he added, that he now felt sure that it came from Agra. He feared that the prisoners in the gaol had broken loose and set fire to some of the houses, He thought we had better appear not to notice the light, for fear of alarming our horsemen. Having given me this caution, Mr. Joyce moved his horse a little away, and dropped behind. He presently rejoined me, and told me that our men had noticed the light, and were discussing among themselves what it could proceed from. Soon after this we noticed that some of our men began to lag behind.

We had ridden on half a mile or so, when the men in advance shouted a challenge to some one approaching. There was a reply, followed by a heavy shuffling noise, and the indistinct form of a camel loomed out of the darkness; two riders were mounted on it. At a word from our men they halted; we did the same, and a conversation ensued. They told us that they were servants of the Seths at Muttra, that they had been sent out to collect news, and were returning home.

By this time they had been recognised by the Seths' horsemen. The conversation became more familiar, and the camel riders more communicative. They informed us that they had been as far as the rebel army, and that it was advancing on Agra. Here Dillawar took up the conversation, and asked if the road to Agra was quiet. 'Quite quiet' was the reply. Our spirits rose. The answer to the next inquiry effectually depressed them. 'Were any of the enemy on the road?' 'Yes, plenty; they had pickets all along it. There was a detachment of a hundred and twenty horsemen in the town of Furrah just ahead; we had better avoid it.'

No more questions were asked; the riders wished our men farewell, jerked the camel's nose-string, the huge creature broke into a shambling trot, and disappeared in the darkness.

This information about the pickets struck us with consternation. If they were all along the road it would be hardly possible to escape them. Our horsemen proposed that we should return to Muttra. To this proposal I at once refused to listen, and it was well that I did so. I felt convinced that our only chance of safety lay in our reaching Agra.

Having decided to proceed, we consulted how to get past the picket before us. Dillawar Khan informed us that we should presently come to a lane which branched off to the right. He proposed that we should turn into this lane; after making a considerable circuit it would bring us again into the high road, some miles nearer Agra. This seemed the best course, and we resolved to adopt it.

A ride of a mile brought us to the lane. I was much disconcerted to find, as we entered it, that it was the disused high road, which, long neglected, was now full of

holes, and was dangerous riding. We rode carefully, but with all our caution our horses frequently stumbled, and one of them fell, fortunately without hurting himself or his rider. It presently began to rain again, at first slightly, then in a tropical downpour. We were soon wet to the skin. We had ridden a long time, when the road improved and the rain ceased. Dillawar Khan thought we might now venture to canter. Our canter brought us to an open space, where we halted to collect our followers. As they came up we counted; we found that besides Dillawar Khan and the guides in advance, we had only six. We shouted; some voices answered, and presently two more of our men joined us.

Where were the rest? Their comrades made no scruple of saying that they had deserted us. To console us they added that such cowards were better away. To this opinion I did not agree. Their numbers were imposing, and on that account a security. Besides, among the missing men were the Zemindar and his son, and they carried two of our four guns, and the loss of the guns was a serious misfortune. We waited a little longer, and then I gave the word to resume our canter. One of the guides interposed, and said that somewhere in advance there was a broken bridge. It would be dangerous to ride fast till we had passed it. We took his advice, and proceeded at a walk.

Before long the guides called out that we were approaching the bridge; the approaches were cut away; we had better descend the bank and cross the ravine. The bank was not high, but the rains had scored it with deep fissures, which made the descent difficult. By good luck we accomplished it without accident. The ravine appeared an abyss, but this appearance was an illusion of the shadows. Two steps brought us to the bottom,

half-a-dozen to the other side. The bridge was as much a delusion as the ravine. It was no more than an arched drain to permit the passage of the water; what in engineering language is termed a 'culvert.' Nevertheless, we should have had some bad accidents had we attempted to cross it. It was completely severed from the road, and lay along the ravine, white and shadowy, like an enormous pipe.

As we were reascending the bank we heard shouts. We halted, and in a few minutes the Zemindar and his son and four of my own men rode up. They were full of excuses, which might have been true.

For some distance the road was full of holes; the guides recommended us to ride cautiously. We did so, but, notwithstanding, two of the horses stumbled and fell, and one of the riders was thrown, but neither he nor the horses were injured. When the holes were passed we cantered again, but slowly. The clouds had risen, the falling rain no longer cooled the air, and the heat began to tell on our horses. We were approaching the high road. The canopy of clouds had been continually rising. It now began to break, and the clouds to roll together in great masses. Through the intervening spaces the blue sky appeared, and the moonlight streamed. It struck me in a careless way how red the moonshine seemed. I thought it pretty, then I thought it odd, and began to wonder what the cause could be. Another minute and it stood revealed. The clouds rose higher, and all along the south horizon, stretching miles to right and left and rising far into the firmament, was a deep, dull, lurid glare. It was the glow of some vast conflagration; there was no more room for doubt—Agra was in flames.

One and all, we and our men, involuntarily checked our horses, and stood still to gaze. Our first sensation

was one of despair, then we took courage, and endeavoured to reassure ourselves and our men. Our men listened to all we said, but from that time their manner changed. They began to whisper among themselves, and to lag behind.

As we rode on the curtain of clouds opened and closed many times in quick succession. We watched these changes with deep anxiety, for on them might depend our lives. If the clouds cleared we could hardly hope in the bright moonlight to pass the enemy unobserved. Watching the clouds, watching our men had made me sleepy. I suppose I partly dozed. The sky had been clearing, the moonlight streaming, when I was roused by the voice of Dillawar Khan. I started, looked around; it was dark, and the rain falling heavily. We had reached the high road, and Dillawar Khan was advising us to be careful in crossing the ditch that bordered it.

A village was now before us; in it we feared there might be a picket of the mutineers. We advanced with all precaution, keeping well in the shade, and on the side where the ground was soft. We passed the village without interruption; if there was a picket the men were asleep. The rain continued to pour; the road had not been lately repaired, its surface was full of holes and depressions, not deep enough to be dangerous, but sufficiently so to hold a good deal of water. The road soon presented much the appearance of a canal. At each step the horses splashed the muddy water. We were soon completely drenched. The water, however, refreshed the horses, and the rain cooled the air. They cantered on briskly without urging.

We had pulled up, and were walking our horses, when Mr. Joyce remarked to me that for some time he thought he had heard odd noises. As he spoke he turned sharply in his saddle, and, addressing Dillawar Khan,

exclaimed: 'There it is again! Surely you hear it?' Dillawar Khan made no reply for a second or two, all the while listening attentively. Then he answered: 'Yes, I hear the noise; it is like that of sheep.' 'Sheep,' I said, 'where are they?' Mr. Joyce explained that Dillawar Khan had not said 'sheep' but 'chains.' The sound of the two words in Hindustanee is very similar. Then he added hurriedly, in a whisper: 'There it is again. Listen!' I did listen, and thought I heard a sound resembling the muffled clanking of a chain. It seemed to proceed from the avenue to my right. We drew our horses to that side of the road, and tried to peer into the avenue, but the darkness was too great. We could distinguish nothing, not even the trees. We went on wondering what the noises could have been, half disposed to attribute them to fancy.

We had ridden about a quarter of a mile when the same sounds again caught our ear. This time there was no mistaking them. From the side of the road came a clear, low clanking of chains, just like that which in stories of haunted houses accompanies the appearance of the ghost. We stopped our horses, and turned to the side of the road from whence the sounds proceeded. The trees just there were thinner; there came through them a faint glimmer of light. We saw a row of dark figures passing slowly along under the shadow of the avenue. They were proceeding in single file, each behind the other. The ground was soft, their footsteps made no noise, but at each movement came the sound of the clanking of a chain. The truth flashed upon us: the Agra gaol had broken loose—these were the escaped prisoners.

My first impulse was to draw my pistol; the holster flap was buttoned to keep out the rain. With my sodden

glove I had some trouble in unfastening it; before I succeeded the figures had passed by. They made no attempt to molest us, they did not appear to see us; they neither turned their heads nor quickened their pace. They moved on with the same slow, silent steps, and vanished in the darkness. As they disappeared we resumed our journey. We were presently joined by our men, they had been lagging behind; of their own accord they now came up. They too had seen the figures—the sight had terrified them; they inquired with anxious voices what it portended. To reassure them I told them what was true, that should the rebels advance the Government had proposed to release the prisoners; no doubt they had done so.

The men received my explanation in silence; I saw that it did not satisfy them, neither did it satisfy Mr. Joyce. He came close and whispered to me in English, 'If the Government had released the prisoners, would they not first have removed their fetters?' I answered 'that perhaps there had not been time.' But the answer did not quite satisfy even myself. After this we said no more; we rode on in silence, deeply pondering. Mr. Joyce was riding beside me; he suddenly called to me in a sharp whisper to be on my guard. I drew my revolver. As I did so I heard the same clanking sounds beside me on my right. I looked and saw a line of figures coming one by one out of the darkness, and passing close beside me, so close that I could have touched them. I held my pistol ready to fire should they attack us. They seemed to have no such intention. They neither turned their heads, nor quickened their pace, nor indicated by any sign that they were aware of our presence. They moved on like the others, with the same slow, silent, shuffling steps, and like them vanished in the darkness; at each step their

chains rattled. They passed on as might phantoms from another world—dimly seen, silent, regardless—issuing from the darkness, gliding by, and re-entering it.

Soon after this we came to a place where there was a wide gap in the avenue. In the midst of this open space rose a square black mass. It was a mound, one of those erected in bygone years for the accommodation of the watchmen employed to patrol the road. On the summit a small fire was burning; clustered round it was a group of the same dark figures. Some were resting, some cooking food, others were drying their dripping garments. The fire gave but a faint glow; the bottom of the mound was hid in shadow. But as we rode past we saw the outlines of a still larger crowd that was crouched before it. They must have seen us, but for any notice they took we might have been invisible: none moved, none rose, none spoke.

A little further we heard again the clanking of chains, and another group passed us—passed like the others, in single file, with the same measured step, the same rattling of their fetters, and the same apparent unconsciousness of our presence—all but two, who, it might have been fancy, I thought slunk away into the gloom as we approached.

We now took a canter and met another group, then another and another; after that the road was lined with them. They passed us in one nearly continuous stream, by twos, by threes; generally in groups of from twenty to thirty, but always in single file, always moving with the same measured step, never by sound or gesture showing sign that they saw us. Many of them were now unfettered; they passed us like phantoms in absolute silence. Wherever there were breaks in the avenue, the spaces between were crowded with more figures—sitting,

lying, cowering round small fires, seldom moving, always silent.

On first meeting this stream of prisoners we had thought it possible that some might attack us. We carried our weapons in our hands, ready to shoot or cut down the first who approached us. As group after group passed by us, and we found ourselves unmolested, unnoticed, these apprehensions vanished. In their place there stole over us a feeling of great horror. The rain continued to fall in torrents, and as we advanced the conflagration began to show through the veil of cloud. The black sky before us became faintly white, the white increased to a rosy tint, which gradually spread over all that portion of the heaven. It became brighter as we went on, and presently was interspersed by tall streaks of redder light, as if flames were shooting up behind, and occasionally blurred coruscations, as of showers of sparks.

The scene was that which painters and poets depict for the infernal regions. There was the black gloom, the lurid glare, the phantoms, the clanking chains; and over us some of the awe of the shadow of death, for our prospect of reaching Agra appeared now but faint. The rain fell in a ceaseless patter; our horses as they moved through the pools on the surface dashed aside the water in a monotonous splash. I was very tired. I was becoming drowsy. Fatigued and sleepy the imagination ceased to be quite under control. As I half dozed the impression came over me that we had really entered the place of punishment, that the figures passing beside me were the condemned souls. It required some effort of the will to shake off the idea.

Presently an incident occurred that effectually aroused me. We passed a village, a little beyond we came to a

hut, the door was open, and a light issuing from it showed that the hut was full of men. They appeared to be drinking. Before the hut was a thatched verandah, in it was a row of earthen pots. From these I concluded that the hut was one of the shops licensed for the sale of liquors. Outside the hut were tethered several horses. One, which stood between us and the open door, was thrown into strong relief. I noticed that it was saddled, and that the saddle was English, with a high pommel and cantle.

I had hardly taken in the scene when Dillawar Khan exclaimed, in a sharp quick tone, 'Gallop for your lives; for your lives gallop your horses!' As he spoke he struck his own horse with his whip, and dashed forward. Mr. Joyce and I did the same. The tramp of our horses apparently reached the shed. A man ran out and shouted to us to stop, at the same time inquiring who we were and where we were going, riding thus at dead of night? Dillawar Khan turned his head, and called out in reply, 'That we were horsemen of the Emperor, proceeding to Agra on urgent business.' We heard a confused sound, as of a rush of men, shouts, and the clatter of horses. The sound was soon drowned in the splashing of the water as we galloped on, and in the patter of the rain. We galloped on for half a mile; my horse, never a fast one, was getting blown—he began to lag. I proposed to Dillawar to pull up and walk. He answered by telling me 'to use the whip! to use the whip! to push on for my life.' Thus exhorted I urged on my horse. After another half mile he became so blown that if further pressed I felt he might drop. I pulled up and told the others to do the same. Dillawar Khan now made no objection. We halted and listened. No sound came but the falling of the rain and the clanking of the fetters,

which told us that prisoners were still passing, though we did not see them.

When our horses had a little recovered their wind we went on again, but for some time only at a walk, partly to rest our horses, partly to enable our followers to overtake us. None came. Our party was now reduced to Dillawar Khan, whom I regarded as one of ourselves, the two guides, and a lad who, when we galloped on at the hut, happened to be in front. As we rode on I inquired of Dillawar Khan what had alarmed him that he started off so suddenly. Mr. Joyce answered for him, by asking me if I had not noticed the saddle of the horse before the hut door. Dillawar Khan had served in the army. He had recognised the saddle as that of our regular cavalry, and knew thereby that the men inside the hut were troopers of the mutineer regiments. The presence of these troopers showed that we had got within the lines of the rebel army. We consulted what we should do. The guides proposed that we should retrace our steps, and endeavour to get back to Muttra, but that was simple madness. At all hazards I felt we must advance, and in this Dillawar agreed. We decided to keep well under the shade of the avenue, and if seen and challenged to represent ourselves as horsemen of the King of Delhi.

We presently came to a village. We passed it unnoticed, but beyond the village the avenue ceased for a space. As we came out of the shade we must have been observed. A trooper galloped suddenly up from the side, placed himself in the middle of the road, and demanded who we were. From his confident manner we made sure that he had comrades near. In this emergency Dillawar Khan showed great presence of mind. Without a moment's hesitation he dashed forward, called to us to do the same, shouting out to the trooper that we were

horsemen of the Emperor carrying dispatches to the army, and demanding what he meant by stopping us.

The trooper was taken by surprise. Seeing us come galloping towards him, he hurriedly got his horse to one side to avoid being ridden over. Before he recovered himself we were out of sight. We heard him shout, and heard voices answer him; but either he took us for friends, or his comrades were too lazy to follow. Anyhow, when we pulled up again we found that we were not pursued.

The avenue presently recommenced, and in accordance to what we had arranged, we rode under the trees on the left side. We had not proceeded far when we heard the tramp of horses, and a party of mutineer cavalry passed us riding along the central portion of the road. One of them challenged us; we made no answer, they passed on. Half a mile further we met another troop of mutineers. Like ourselves they were riding on a side avenue, and fortunately for us it was the one on the side opposite.

The stream of prisoners had been gradually getting smaller. We came on the prisoners at longer intervals, and then in fewer numbers. After we had passed this last troop of mutineers they ceased for a while altogether.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MIDNIGHT RIDE—*continued.*

We had ridden some little distance, when on the side of the road to our right we saw a light which appeared to issue from a hut. Somewhere near here there resided a Fukkeer who subsisted on alms given him by travellers. Dillawar Khan thought that the light might proceed from his hut, and suggested that we should halt and send one of our men to ascertain. We accordingly pulled up, and Dillawar Khan addressing one of the guides, desired him to ride quietly up to the hut, and if it was the Fukkeer's to inquire the news. Instead of obeying the man began to make excuses, and to make them in a sullen, not to say insolent, tone. Dillawar Khan neither argued with him nor rebuked him, but turning to the other guide requested him to go forward. After a little hesitation the man obeyed and rode towards the light. We followed, but halting so soon as we arrived within ear shot.

The guide having approached the hut checked his horse, and called out the usual salutation. From within the hut a voice answered, inquiring who it was that addressed him. The guide replied as Dillawar had directed him. He said that he was a horseman of the Emperor on his way to Agra, and requested a drink of water and a few whiffs of tobacco. The inquiry was followed by

sounds of movement inside the hut. In a minute or two the Fukkeer came out of the hut and handed the guide a bowl of water and a small hookah; we could see the glow of the charcoal as he passed it. The guide drank the water, drew a puff or two from the hookah, and then inquired if all was well in front, and if he could proceed in safety.

We listened eagerly for the answer. It came as follows, 'All is well, my son, go on without fear; you will meet with no enemy.' We were elated, we did not at the moment consider to whom the term enemy was applied. We were shortly enlightened. The Fukkeer, who appeared very good-natured and communicative, proceeded to inform the horseman that the rebel army had advanced in the afternoon towards Agra, that the English soldiers had come out to meet them, that a battle had ensued, and the English had been beaten and had fled into the fort.

While the Fukkeer was talking a traveller came up and joined in the conversation; he confirmed the truth of the Fukkeer's story, and added some further particulars of his own. Among others, that the rebel army was besieging the fort, and had already knocked down one of the bastions.

In their eagerness to hear our men had advanced their horses. Some movement attracted the Fukkeer's notice; he looked up, startled, and pointing in our direction, inquired of the guide in a frightened tone 'who those men were.' The guide replied that they were his companions, also troopers of the Emperor. After some further conversation Dillawar Khan whispered to me that we had better leave. I moved on my horse, and after some difficulty the rest followed, the guide wishing the Fukkeer farewell.

As soon as we were out of hearing we debated what now to do. We decided that it would be best still to go on. We next considered by which road we should proceed. A mile in advance a road branched off to the right and led to the fort, by a circuitous route avoiding the city. Dillawar Khan proposed that by this road we should proceed; I decided, however, to keep to the main road on which we now were. It was fortunate that I did so. We presently approached the town of Secundra. The glare for some time had been becoming brighter. It was now sufficient to illuminate the road, and to show the groups of prisoners who again swarmed along it. The light, though bright, was very confusing. We seemed to be enveloped in a luminous mist. Suddenly my eyes were dazzled by bright flashes—the mist vanished. I found that we were in the street of Secundra, and burning houses all around us. Flames were shooting up in tall pyramids; showers of sparks filled the air.

The flames made every object nearly as distinct as in the daytime, only immediately under the wall of the mausoleum there was a narrow line of shadow. Along this we proceeded in single file. The square was full of prisoners—some were setting fire to the houses, some cooking food, others were resting or drying their clothes. The gateway towered up with great magnificence, the flames displayed the red tint of the stone, even the colours of the mosaics. Beyond the mausoleum the fires had nearly died out, the end of the street was in comparative darkness. As we issued from the town into the open country we beheld a spectacle the like of which it had fallen to but few persons to contemplate.

Before us at a distance of some four miles lay the station of Agra. It extended far away to right and left, and for miles beyond. Over this vast area hovered the

glow as of an expiring bonfire. The sight well-nigh filled us with despair. We went on in silence, much doubting of our fate. Presently Dillawar inquired of me whether we should be admitted into the fort if we succeeded in reaching it. He added that it was a rule that the gate of a fortress was never opened from evening to the following dawn. He suggested that we had better take refuge in the house of a friend he had in the suburbs till the daybreak. This difficulty had not occurred to me; I thought it would be prudent to accept Dillawar Khan's offer, but an accident prevented us. The suburb, which was really a village near the station, was reached by a lane which branched off about half a mile in advance. In the darkness we passed it, and did not discover that we had done so till it was too late to return.

We had ridden on for some distance, and were approaching the station of Agra, when I perceived in front what seemed an immense cage of fire. It was something of the form of a gigantic hencoop, and seemed composed of bars of fire, rising far into the heavens. I pointed it out to Mr. Joyce, who was as much puzzled at it as I was, as also were Dillawar Khan and our men. Before we had advanced a hundred yards a second burning cage appeared, and soon after another and another. Our wonder was becoming extreme. A few paces more, and the phenomenon stood explained.

Anyone who has ridden by night is aware how deceptive is the apparent distance of lights when seen in the dark. The cage, which I had imagined to be near the horizon, was really close at hand; a turn of the road brought us beside it. We saw that it was nothing more than the glowing rafters of a burnt bungalow. As we proceeded we passed many more such cages, but their

light was paler. While noticing this it suddenly struck us that the houses must have been set on fire by persons leaving, not entering, Agra, as the further we advanced the fainter was the glow of the embers. We concluded, therefore, that the incendiaries were the escaping prisoners, and the idea suggested itself that perhaps after all the rebel army had not entered the station. At this suggestion our spirits rose.

We now came to the broad road that crossed the high road we were on at right angles, and led round to the fort by a considerable circuit through the English station. Our guides wished us to take this road, as it avoided the city; but as time with us was everything, for the day would break ere long, I thought it best to proceed by the shortest route, and desired them to continue along the road we were on. Instead of obeying they turned their horses, and appeared as if they would ride off and leave us. They had for some time become very disrespectful; I had avoided noticing their behaviour lest they should desert us. It was now necessary to bring them to order. I drew my pistol, Mr. Joyce raised his carbine; we threatened to blow their brains out if they did not proceed as I had directed them. The threat and the sight of the weapons frightened them; they rode on, I and Mr. Joyce keeping close behind them, Dillawar Khan and the lad bringing up the rear.

We presently came to the wall that enclosed the gaol buildings. A dull glow appeared above the wall, and we noticed that the ground below it was thickly strewed with fragments of paper. The road skirted the wall for some distance, then it made a sharp turn to the right, and we were in darkness. I could just perceive that we were advancing up a narrow lane with houses on either side. We had not proceeded very far when Mr. Joyce reined

in his horse, and whispered to me to look where he pointed. I did, and made out a group of men lying on the side of the lane which just there was rather wider. They seemed asleep. Dillawar Khan advanced his horse; the movement aroused the men; they started into a sitting posture, and appeared inclined to run, but perceiving that we barred their passage they remained still.

Dillawar Khan now addressed them very politely, informed them that he was a trooper of the Emperor, and requested them to tell him if he could safely enter the city. He also desired to hear the particulars of the battle, which he understood had taken place the previous afternoon. Dillawar's politeness was thrown away; the men either refused to reply, or when pressed again and again only vouchsafed the sulkiest of answers. After a little the guides lost patience, and took the examination into their own hands, conducting it, however, in a very different fashion.

Commencing with a torrent of abuse, they next told the men that they knew very well who they were, and what they had been doing, and advised them to answer at once the questions put to them, or it would be the worse for them. This style of address proved far more efficacious than Dillawar Khan's mild exhortations. The men at once changed their tone, and promised to tell all they knew, though that, they averred, was but little; for they were but poor labourers who minded only their concerns, and how to get bread for themselves and their families at home. They were so poor, they added, that they were sleeping in the street for want of money to procure lodgings. This last assertion the guides received with scornful jeers, and issued a fresh volley of abuse.

'Labourers, indeed! nice work you have been at!

burning the houses!' Then threatening them with their whips, 'Do you take us for fools, you wretches? Speak the truth at once or see what will happen.' The men were now cowed, they dropped their whining tone, and answered pretty readily. They described the battle very much as the Fukkeer had done, except that they declared that the rebel army had not entered the station. They were not, however, certain that some of their cavalry had not done so. The Fukkeer had mentioned that a picket of the rebel troopers had taken possession of the Kotwallee, as the head police office is termed, had installed a new Kotwal, and proclaimed the King of Delhi. As we should have to pass the Kotwallee to reach the fort, we were especially anxious to ascertain if this information was correct. We had begun now rather to doubt it. I whispered to the guides to question the men on the subject; but either they did not know or would not say. We could extract from them no reliable statements. We got tired of inquiring, and moved on.

At the next turn of the lane we came on another group, lying asleep on the side of the lane. These we also woke up and examined, and got the same information—extracted, however, with rather more difficulty. As regarded the picket at the Kotwallee they were still more evasive. It was so all-important for us to make sure that Mr. Joyce interrupted the guides and himself put one or two questions. Mr. Joyce had been brought up in the country, and spoke the language perfectly; nevertheless, I felt certain that from something in his accent or manner the men perceived that he was not a native. They burst into a good-humoured laugh, and replied by telling us to go on without apprehension, for we should find neither troopers nor anything else to stop our way to the fort. And, so saying, they started up-

right, and before we were aware of their intention dashed past our horses, and were out of sight in an instant.

We did not care to follow them, and went on. We passed several more groups lying asleep, but we did not think it worth while to stop and question them. The lane, after several turns, conducted us into the principal street of the city. Somewhere about the centre of this street was the Kotwallee, and here our fate would be decided. If the rebels were there we could hardly hope to escape them. The street was silent and dark, but through the shutters of nearly every house a light gleamed, showing that the inmates were awake and watching. We went on and on, our horses' hoofs clattering on the pavement. I was wondering when we should reach the Kotwallee, when suddenly the street narrowed; it became perfectly dark, then dimly light, and I saw that we had passed under an archway into an open space. A vast dark mass loomed before us. We had passed the Kotwallee unawares. We were now safe, the dark mass was the fort of Agra; we had entered the open space that lies before the gateway.

Not, however, altogether safe; we might be followed from the city, and attacked before we could gain admittance. The clouds had gathered thickly once more, and the rain commenced again to fall. The darkness was so great that even our men who knew the spot were at fault. After vainly trying to make out the road one of them dismounted, groped about, and presently called quietly to us to follow. We crossed what appeared to be a courtyard, and passed through what seemed to me to be a small gateway, and then we came on to a very narrow road. Before and above us was an impenetrable blackness, on either side the sensation of an empty space. Our guides told us that we were standing on the

bridge that spanned the outer ditch, and that before us was the great wall of the fort, and one of the principal entrances.

Mr. Joyce shouted—his shout appeared to waken someone. We heard a sound of movement, and then a voice issuing from the darkness high above inquired who we were. Mr. Joyce replied, telling who we were, and begging that we might be let in. The voice answered that it was against the rules; we must wait where we were till the dawn. On this I called out and begged that my brother might be informed of our arrival. My request, we could hear, gave rise to some discussion; there was a talking and a calling to some other persons. Then another voice informed us that a man should be sent to tell my brother; but that as his quarters were at the other end of the fort, it might be some time before the message could be delivered. After this intimation there was silence; the people above had lain down again or left the roof of the gateway—we below stood waiting with what patience we could till the day should break. To while away the time Mr. Joyce and I chatted, and our guides began to sing their own praises, giving me, at the same time, broad hints that such fidelity as they had displayed ought not to go unrewarded. Very different was the behaviour of Dillawar Khan, to whom our lives were really due. He sat quiet on his horse, neither boasting of his services nor showing expectations of recompense, only speaking when I addressed him, apparently unconscious that he had done more than was his duty to the Government whose salt he had eaten for more than fifty years.

In about half an hour the dawn began to break, and we saw that we were in a triangular courtyard, with a gateway on each side, and at the same time we heard a bustle

and talking above, and a voice which I recognised as my brother's. He told me that this gate was closed, but that we should get admitted by going round to the southern entrance; to reach it, he added, we must pass through the archway to our left, and proceed along the road that ran under the walls of the fort. We did as we were directed. We crossed the bridge, passed under the archway, and found ourselves on a broad hard road; to our right was a bare open space full of ravines, on our left an immense ditch, and beyond it a vast wall of deep red stone. The wall was crowned by battlements, and at intervals there projected from it great circular towers.

After skirting the wall for more than a quarter of a mile we came to a palisade formed of stakes and bushes; it stretched across the road, stopping all further progress. At a rough gate in the palisade stood an English soldier, who bade us halt. After explaining who we were, I and Mr. Joyce were admitted, but neither Dillawar Khan nor our other horsemen were allowed to follow. I felt distressed at this till Dillawar Khan told me to be under no anxiety on their account, as they could get lodgings in the city, and would wait there till they heard from me.

On passing through the gate we found ourselves in a large enclosure; a number of horses were standing picketed, and others wandering loose. There were several English soldiers, and some other Englishmen, not in uniform. They all stared at us in a manner that I thought rather rude, till I remembered how odd our appearance must be in our native dresses. The enclosure looked very disorderly, and the soldiers tired, as if they had been up all night. I was rather at a loss where next to proceed, when I saw my brother approaching; he had come down from the fort to conduct us into it. He con-

gratulated us on our safe arrival, and then told us to dismount, as horses were not admitted within the defences. There was no one to take charge of them, so we looped their bridles to the stakes, slackened their girths, and left them, promising the sentry a present if he would look after them till our return. We then accompanied my brother towards the great gateway, a vast mass of wall and battlement, standing out from the fort very magnificently. We passed over a bridge, went through several archways and enclosures, and entered what seemed the courtyard of a castle, but a castle only elsewhere to be seen in dreams or read of in fairy tales. Lofty walls enclosed it, and galleries supported on slender columns ran round it. In the centre of one of the sides was a tall archway, flanked by towers; above the archway were windows, balconies, and projecting alcoves of exquisite lightness. The summit, which towered high aloft, was crowned with a line of small cupolas of white marble. We passed under the archway, which led into a long tunnel; there were doors on either side. Through some, which were open, we saw into vaulted chambers full of soldiers; beyond the tunnel we came on to a steep incline.

On reaching the summit of the incline it seemed as if we had been transported to another region. The great walls of the fort had disappeared, we were standing on a large open space on which we perceived nothing but ranges of low though picturesque buildings. Here Mr. Joyce left us, and passed through a gateway in front on his way to the other extremity of the fort, where he had been told that his family were residing. My brother conducted me towards a block of buildings on our right; we passed through a low archway, and entered a garden of the 'Arabian Nights.' There were shady trees of the deepest

foliage, paths of white marble, and in the centre of the garden an immense square basin full of water constructed of the same beautiful material. A terrace of white marble rose beyond. On it was a white marble pavilion, at the four corners of its roof were gilded cupolas, and on either side of the terrace appeared the golden domes of other pavilions.

The sun had just risen, the gold shone, the marble glistened—it was like a scene from fairyland. The other three sides of the garden were enclosed by ranges of plainer buildings. A broad stone terrace stretched before them—along it my brother proceeded. We passed several doors, and at length stopped at one before which a curtain was suspended; my brother raised it, and we entered a small room, dark, and full of furniture. Here I found my sister-in-law and her little boy; and, anxiously awaiting me, A—— with the children. Her anxiety was not without reason. Our danger had been far greater than at the time I was aware of. I afterwards learnt that we had ridden right through the rebel army. Nothing saved us but the darkness of the night, the torrents of rain, and the fidelity of Dillawar Khan.

I have said it was fortunate that before reaching Secundra I decided not to proceed by the road to the right. Had we done so, we should have met the main body of the mutineers. It was not, however, on the road that we escaped our greatest perils, nor was it till years had passed that I learnt them.

When we entered the Seths' house in the afternoon their Mohammedan guards proposed to murder us all as we sat on the terrace. The manager heard of the plot—he ran and informed his masters. They were terrified, half stupefied. He implored them to exert themselves, warning them that if we fell the English Government

would take a terrible vengeance, and that utter destruction would fall on them and on their house. Urged thus by their manager, the Seths went down to their guards, and by threats, persuasions, and some display of force they succeeded at length in inducing the men to abandon their design.

It was this that caused the confusion in the house, I had noticed, the delay in the arrival of the escort, and the agitation of the Seths themselves during their interview with me. Disappointed thus in their intention to murder us all on the terrace, the guards next proposed to kill me and Mr. Joyce as we left the house. They had arranged to cut us down as we stooped to pass through the small doorway in the barricade. It was to prevent their doing so that the Seths had insisted on accompanying us to the street, and lest the men should follow us that they sent some of their most trustworthy servants to see us safely out of the city.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST THREE DAYS.

My brother's room was small, and rendered still smaller by curtains which partitioned off a space at the end. This space my brother had kindly made over to A—— and the children. The rest was so crammed with furniture that there was hardly space to move. The first congratulations over, I retired behind the curtain to change my native dress for an English suit I had brought with me in a bundle. Tea was then made, and while drinking it I gave an outline of my adventures, and was told in return what had occurred at Agra. But I could make out little, except that there had been a battle, and that they had all come into the fort. From the appearance of the room I concluded that they had come in in some confusion.

Having drunk our tea my brother and I went out to enable the Ayahs to dress the children. My brother had some business to attend to—I returned to the enclosure to look after my horse. I found him in a sorry condition. He had broken loose from the palisade, and begun fighting with one of the other horses. With much difficulty he had been captured. He was now secured by a rope, and covered with mud and bruises, none of which, however, proved serious. With the help of an officer I got permission to have him picketed in a better situation on

the river side of the fort, and this done I returned to my brother's room, where I found them all dressed and waiting for breakfast. We waited long, and then my brother went out to make inquiries. He returned with the information that the meal would not be ready for another hour. While waiting and chatting I happened to mention my companions at Muttra, and that they were descending the river in a boat. My brother inquired if I had warned the battery, and I learnt, to my horror, that the artillerymen had received orders to fire on any native boat seen approaching. I hurried off to find the officer. My brother did not know who he was or where were his quarters, but he gave me some general directions as to where he thought I might obtain information.

I passed through the archway, and soon lost myself in a maze of courts and passages. All were full of people, chiefly natives and half-castes. None could tell me the way to the battery, or give me any information about the officer who was in charge of it. I wandered about making inquiries for nearly an hour, and then had to return unsuccessful, and found them just sitting down to breakfast. The meal consisted of only rice and lentils, and a small piece of cold meat. There was neither bread nor butter, nor had we even milk to our tea. My brother explained that there was no food to be got beyond what little they had brought in with them. He added that the delay in the arrival of the breakfast had arisen from the difficulty of finding a place to prepare it in.

We had hardly despatched our simple viands, when we heard a sound of firing, and some one ran in to say that the fort was being attacked, and that we were all to hurry off to the ramparts. My brother seized his gun, I took mine, and we ran through the archway and joined

a crowd of people, who had issued from the adjoining courts. Arrived at the ramparts, we could see nothing. The battlements were too high to look over, and only the distant country could be seen through the loopholes, but from below came the sound of musketry, heavy and continuous. We went on to the nearest bastion, where, by climbing on an embrasure, we could look down on the ditch and the outer defences.

The firing proceeded from the palisaded enclosure where I had entered. A number of English soldiers and men out of uniform were shooting through the openings between the stakes, and a crowd were standing behind them looking on. The shots were not returned, and, as far as we could see, there was no enemy. Someone suggested that they might be concealed among the ravines, which seemed probable. But just then an officer came up in great indignation, and told us that the soldiers were firing only for their own amusement. The objects aimed at appeared to be a donkey and a flock of vultures. These we now regarded with interest. The donkey went on grazing, and the vultures, gorged with the flesh of some dead sheep lying near, sat placid. The badness of the shooting surprised us, till someone arrived from below and explained it. He informed us that the soldiers were all very drunk.

Presently an order came from the General to stop the firing. It did not receive much attention. Those who were tired of the amusement left off. The rest continued it till the afternoon.

With my brother's assistance I now succeeded in finding my way to the battery, and procured an order that the boat was not to be fired at. This matter disposed of, I proceeded to take possession of the quarters assigned me. These were a room nearly over my brother's apart-

ment, and of about the same size. I found it filled with soldiers' boxes and bedsteads, for the range of buildings had been used hitherto as a magazine for commissariat stores. The fort was full of natives. I hired some, and with the assistance also of two English soldiers by noon I had got the things removed and the room cleaned. I let two of the bedsteads remain, and contrived to borrow a mat, a child's cot, two chairs, and a small table, and then we moved in. I was puzzled what to do with the boxes and the rest of the bedsteads, for I could find no one to take charge of them; so I left them on the pavement, and in the course of the afternoon different people, who I suppose had need of them, carried them away.

The cleaning the room and removing the bedsteads had made me very hot and dusty; I was anxious to wash, but we had no water. Someone informed me that there was a well just outside the archway; but before drawing the water it was necessary to procure some utensil to hold it. I set out in search of some can or a jar. Chance directed me to a place where I found a cart laden with the large tin cans supplied to soldiers, each the size of a pail. Near the cart an English sergeant was standing. I inquired of him who could give me leave to take a can. He answered that he did not know, and in my place would not waste time in ascertaining, adding, with a smile, 'that if I wanted a can I had better do like the rest, and take one.' I took the hint and carried off two. I was none too soon: when I next passed by the cart was empty.

The cans provided, I now went in search of the water. The well was in an open space, not very far from the entrance to our square. The space was covered with carts and gun-carriages, and the ground in a condition beyond description. It was literally covered with filth and

rubbish, much of which the heavy rain was filtering into the well. The well had been only recently dug, the sides were not bricked or boarded, and in consequence of the pressure of the crowds resorting to it the upper portions were crumbling in, which made the approach to it rather dangerous. Our Ayahs were very good: they helped to fill the cans and also to carry them to our room, and they performed many other services, which were not part of their regular duties, nor quite in accordance with the rules of their caste.

At five o'clock we dined. The dinner was even more frugal than the breakfast. The piece of meat had been consumed in the morning; we satisfied our hunger with rice and lentils. I learnt, to my distress, that my brother's stock of even these was nearly exhausted. I did not like further to encroach on it, so I set out to see if I could procure any food for ourselves. The common misfortune had made all kind. Our next-door neighbours learnt our difficulty, and relieved us from it by asking us to join a small mess they had established.

At sunset from every door Ayahs and children streamed forth; the elders joined them, and the garden assumed the appearance of a crowded promenade. But, surrounded as it was by buildings, the atmosphere was exceedingly close and oppressive. We wandered out in search of fresher air. We picked our way through the carts and gun-carriages, passed a troop of artillery horses, and came to an inclined plane that conducted us to the flat roof of an immense circular tower. The tower overlooked the river: through the embrasures of the battlements flowed a gentle current of air very refreshing. We sat down on a cannon to enjoy it. As darkness came on flames rose from various parts of the cantonments. We also perceived bright spots in the more distant horizon,

which showed that the villagers had been fighting, and that the victors had been burning the homes of the vanquished.

We drank our tea on the flat roof of the building. Our hosts had selected this spot partly for coolness, partly to enable them to arrange their own room for the night. The ascent to the roof was not easy; the tea was made and consumed under much difficulty. The windows of our room opened on a narrow balcony, which was the common passage to the rooms beyond. To obtain privacy, we were compelled to hang mats before them. The night was very oppressive. The clouds hung low, there was no breeze, the room was small and the heat overwhelming; but I had ridden far, and had not closed my eyes for more than forty hours. Notwithstanding the heat I soon fell asleep, and did not awake till the daylight was streaming through the curtain-mats. I awoke bathed in perspiration—literally, not figuratively, my clothes were as wet as if they had been dipped in water. I had none to change, the only resource was to hang them in the sun. So fierce were its rays that an exposure of two minutes was sufficient to dry them.

As I descended the stairs I was conscious of an unpleasant odour. Having passed the archway, I discovered its source. Against the outer wall was piled in a heap the remains of the various meals that had been eaten in the square during the previous day, together with other impurities. A few yards further lay a dead sheep.

Our breakfast was of the same simple character as our meal of the day before. The food consisted of rice and lentils and some unleavened cakes, for our hosts had brought in a bag of flour. For a besieged garrison it was fare not to be complained of. But there were doubts if it would continue. The resources of our hosts were

limited, and neither we nor the other guests were able to contribute to their replenishment. We had money enough, but food was not to be purchased. The collapse of our mess appeared imminent, when a notice from the Commissariat averted it.

Just before noon a native orderly came round with a written announcement, that during the continuance of the siege rations would be issued, and each head of a family was directed to repair, at three in the afternoon, to the stores, to receive them. At the appointed hour I started. I did not know where the stores were, nor could I ascertain, but meeting a crowd I joined it, concluding it was bent on the same errand. We traversed a vast number of courts and lanes till we arrived at quite the other end of the fort. Here, in a hollow space, was a large square building. At the gateway sat an English officer. He inquired my name and the number of my family, and, being informed on these points, he gave me an order to receive a certain amount of rice, flour, sugar, and lentils.

Having received the order, I passed through the gateway and entered a large enclosure surrounded by arched cells of massive masonry. The doors of some of them were open, displaying within heaps of flour, rice, and other provisions. Several grain-sellers were seated before the heaps and weighing out the stores in small wooden scales, accompanying the operation with a droning chant very soporific. A crowd of natives were pressing forward to get their rations, and some English officers and a number of attendants were present to preserve order.

Having been allotted my supplies, I found I had nothing in which to place them. The rest of the applicants had brought bags, handkerchiefs, and even pieces

of floorcloth. The natives used their long shawls of white cotton. I tried to borrow some cloth, but failed; I was about to return for a towel when one of the officers kindly saved me the trouble by lending me two long bags belonging to the department. I made over my rations to the common stock of our mess, and we ate our dinner with more tranquil minds, relieved for the present, at least, of fear of starvation.

At sunset we repaired again to the ramparts. As we passed the archway, I noticed that the heap of rubbish had perceptibly increased, both in size and offensiveness. The dead sheep was also exhaling a most sickening effluvia. We ascended to one of the towers on the land side, and sat by an embrasure; through the opening we could see the ravines, the cantonments, and glimpses in places of the country beyond. At dusk the fires appeared as on the previous evening, showing that the destruction of the station was still proceeding; a few streaks of flame that rose far away indicated that fresh villages were being set on fire.

The heat of this night, I thought, exceeded even that of the preceding one; perhaps sleeping less soundly I was more conscious of it. I awoke again bathed in perspiration; the sun's rays dried my clothes, but they could not remove the dust and dirt with which three days and nights of continual wearing had encrusted them. Clothes were no more to be purchased than food; I wanted sadly a change of garments, so I set out to beg or to borrow. All were kind, though few had much to spare; one friend lent me a shirt, another a coat, while from a chance stranger I received the gift of a pair of trousers. I returned home, able to enjoy the unspeakable luxury of clean clothes.

In the course of the day I had the greater pleasure of

learning the safe arrival of my companions from Muttra, about whose safety we were becoming anxious. Things had happened to them just as I had predicted—the stream had carried the boat beneath the bank, the villagers had collected on it and shot at them; the water fell, and the boat grounded on a sand bank, and there remained until the river rose again. After a long delay they reached the ravines below Secundra. One of the boatmen had been wounded, the rest refused to proceed further. The party had to abandon the boat, and with it their guns and provisions. From a friendly villager they procured native dresses, and disguised in these they made their way to the fort along the bank of the river.

We had now been in the fort three days, and had as yet seen nothing of the rebel army. It was supposed to be lying hid behind the ravines, constructing batteries, which we expected would presently open on us. There was also a great apprehension among the engineers that the enemy were mining beneath the walls of the fort. On the north side, the houses of the city approached so close to the defences that they might easily dig mines without our perceiving it. The subterranean passages also caused us considerable uneasiness. Little was known about them, except that they were very extensive, and there were many traditions that some of them extended under the ditch, and had exits in the city. All kinds of rumours began to circulate; passing from mouth to mouth they developed into stories, that increased the apprehensions to which they owed their birth. Most of these stories were silly enough, but some were not uninteresting. One or two I will hereafter relate.

For our apprehensions there were certainly very sufficient grounds. The defences of the fort were very incomplete; half the cannon were unmounted, the powder

magazines had not been made bomb-proof, and a variety of other equally necessary works had either not been commenced, or were still unfinished. Worst of all, it had been ascertained that the supply of provisions was very inadequate, and that of what there was much was bad. If the siege should be protracted we might die of hunger, or be forced to surrender. A more immediate danger lay in the absence of all sanitary arrangements; within the circuit of the fort walls were congregated more than seven thousand human beings, besides horses, bullocks, and other animals; for the preservation of cleanliness among this multitude no steps whatever had been taken. The accumulation of filth was something appalling. The rubbish heap at our archway had reached the dimensions of a small haycock, and another dead sheep had made its appearance; it lay putrefying in the sun by the side of its companion. All over the fort the smells were sickening; it was difficult to walk without stepping in some impurity.

Two cases of cholera had already occurred, and ended fatally. It was felt that if something were not done we might find among us an enemy more dangerous than any outside, in the shape of an outbreak of that fearful pestilence. That anything at present would be done there appeared, however, but small prospect. The authorities seemed paralysed, the gates were kept closed, the sentries mounted guard, and the other ordinary routine duties were performed. Beyond this things were left to themselves; the works for defence were not pushed on, nor was the filth removed, nor any attempt made to ascertain the real position of the mutineer army that was besieging us.

For the first two days all was bewilderment; on the third, as the condition of things began to be realised,

murmurs arose against the authorities. The discontent was increased by rumours, at first whispered, soon openly spoken, that in real fact authorities there were none. Mr. Colvin's mind, it was said, had given way, and the General become imbecile. The first of these statements was an exaggeration, the other altogether untrue; but at the time they both obtained general credence.

Things were in this state when some natives presented themselves at the fort gate. They said that they were servants to some of the English gentlemen, and had come to join their masters. After some inquiry they were admitted; questioned as to the enemy they asserted that there was none—the entire rebel army they declared had marched away after the battle. Their statement was not believed. They were thought to be spies; but more servants arrived and repeated the same story, and they were followed by persons of higher rank, of whose veracity there could be no suspicion, and who gave similar information. Its truth could hardly be doubted, but as a precaution against treachery it was determined to send out a column to reconnoitre. The column consisted of a party of English soldiers, some guns, and the mounted militia; it traversed the city and a good part of the cantonments, and returned, reporting that it could find no trace of the enemy. For three days we had been guarding against an imaginary foe, and had remained within the fort for fear of an army that existed only in our own imaginations.

This discovery did not raise the credit of the authorities, least of all that of the General. The gates were now thrown open, our servants joined us, and provisions flocked in; henceforth we suffered no inconveniences but such as resulted from the heat, our confined quarters, and the difficulty of procuring almost all articles of

ordinary English use. With these last we should have been better supplied but for an excess of patriotism on the part of the volunteers who accompanied the column. They smashed to pieces the contents of the shop of a Mohammedan tradesman, who dealt in European goods, but who had joined the rebels. It was felt afterwards that it would have equally punished the tradesman, and been of more benefit to us, if the articles, instead of being destroyed, had been brought into the fort, and either sold or distributed.

Having concluded my description of our first few days in the fort, I will now give the reader a brief account of the events that had obliged us to take refuge within it.

CHAPTER XIX.

BATTLE OF SHAHGUNGE.—PRIOR EVENTS.

MR. COLVIN was a man of great ability—for ordinary times a most excellent governor; but he was constitutionally unfitted for a crisis such as the mutiny. He lost alike his judgment and self-reliance, and threw himself for advice and guidance on those around him.

The head officials then at Agra were men but ill-qualified to guide him. Like himself men of ability, they were also men of routine, and were besides ignorant of the native feeling; many of them had never, and none of them for some years had held situations that brought them into direct intercourse with the natives, beyond their own servants and subordinates. Finding these still obedient and deferential, they imagined the rest of the population to be the same.

They regarded the mutiny as a mere military revolt; the rural disturbances as the work of the mobs. The mass of the people they considered as thoroughly loyal, attached to our rule as well from gratitude as self-interest, being thoroughly conscious of the benefits it had conferred upon them. Holding these opinions, they did not comprehend either the nature or the magnitude of the crisis. To their inability to do so, many lives and much treasure were needlessly sacrificed.

Events then moved rapidly; within a few weeks of the breaking out of the mutiny our empire in Upper India had all but disappeared, and a rebel army was approaching Agra.

The arrangements for the defence of the station chiefly fell on the magistrate Mr. Drummond. Properly, the magistrate of Agra was not entitled to direct official intercourse with the Lieutenant-Governor. But in the exigency of the times the rules of routine were a good deal set aside. Mr. Colvin sent for Mr. Drummond, consulted him, and before long fell completely under his influence. In many respects Mr. Colvin could not have selected a better adviser, for Mr. Drummond possessed great energy and resolution, and was very little trammelled by routine. Unfortunately his judgment was not equal to his other qualities, and having formed an opinion he did not easily relinquish it.

Mr. Drummond laid down a plan of defence which was simple and bold, and which, had it been successful, would have been regarded as a stroke of genius. He considered that if the English remained as usual, exhibiting no signs of fear, the moral effect would be sufficient to overawe the native population. As for the mutineers, he did not believe they would approach Agra, having nothing to gain by doing so. Should they do so, however, he considered that our force was sufficient to repel them. Beyond increasing the police, Mr. Drummond was opposed to the adoption of any precautionary measure.

From these opinions the chief military authorities entirely dissented. They regarded it as certain that one or other of the rebel armies would threaten Agra. Our force they considered to be quite inadequate for the defence of such an immense station. They therefore

recommended that the fort should be provisioned and placed in a state of defence, and that on the approach of the enemy the women, children, and other non-combatants should be sent into it, leaving the troops free to act. Mr. Drummond's measures were supported by the leading civil officials; the proposals of the military authorities by nearly all the rest of the English. Between these conflicting counsels Mr. Colvin was unable to decide. Finally, he permitted each side to have partly their own way. There resulted a confusion which, had it not occurred, might have been deemed impossible under such a Government as ours.

Mr. Drummond had received permission to raise additional police, and also to supply them with arms from the magazine. He availed himself of this permission to an extent that ere long excited general alarm. The police were increased till they constituted a force many times larger than the regular troops. No less then seven thousand muskets and two hundred thousand rounds of ammunition were served out to them. These police, hastily raised, were entirely undisciplined, their characters and antecedents often unknown. The presence of such an armed mob was regarded by the military authorities, as well as the English generally, as a possible source of great danger. The uneasiness felt was increased by rumours that arose that these new police were entirely disaffected, and were prepared, should the enemy approach, to turn against us.

Representations were made to Mr. Colvin; he was urged, and in the strongest manner, to disarm the police or at least to reduce their number, but in vain.

Mr. Drummond, like most civilians of that time, was partial to Mohammedans. He bestowed his patronage almost exclusively on them. His personal attendants and

his chief officials were of that faith, as were also the large majority of the new police. The conduct of the Mohammedans elsewhere, since the disturbances commenced, had shown that they were as a body bitterly hostile to our rule. There seemed no reason why in this hostility the Agra Mohammedans should not participate. The placing of the local administration so exclusively into their hands was from the first regarded as imprudent, and it soon began to be considered as in the last degree dangerous. There was then at Agra a large population of Eurasians and native Christians. Born and bred in the country, this population were far better acquainted with the feelings and proceedings of the natives than were the English. They had from the first distrusted the fidelity of Mr. Drummond's Mohammedan officials. They presently accused them of acts of positive treason. They asserted that these officials were in correspondence with the mutineers, that they were exciting rebellion in the city, and arranging for a rising of the police should the rebel army approach.

These accusations were in themselves not improbable, they were supported by considerable proof, they ought to have been investigated; they were contemptuously disregarded. Mr. Drummond would believe nothing against his Mohammedan subordinates, and in his incredulity he was supported by the chief civil officials. These gentlemen shared Mr. Drummond's partiality for the Mohammedans. It was the feeling of their day, and accompanied, I am sorry to say, by a corresponding contempt and dislike for the Eurasians and native Christians.

The fact that the accusations against the Mohammedan officials emanated from that class was sufficient to insure their being disregarded.

They were not, however, disregarded by the military authorities, nor by the English generally. On the contrary, they were entirely believed, and, as the event showed, believed rightly. The dismissal of the accused persons was urged upon Mr. Colvin; the demand was resisted by the chief civil officials. Quarrels ensued, bitter and violent. In the ardour of partisanship, Mr. Colvin's advisers permitted and supported proceedings in which prudence, common sense, even the instinct of self-preservation were lost sight of.

A volunteer corps of Christians, lately raised, was disbanded, and their arms distributed to the Mohammedan police. It was next proposed to disarm the entire Christian population, on the pretext that their carrying weapons gave offence to the Mohammedans. It was only on the strong remonstrance of the military that the scheme was abandoned.

As yet no mutineer force had threatened Agra; the regiments as they revolted had proceeded to Delhi or Lucknow. But this immunity from attack did not now appear as if it would continue. The Neemuch Brigade commenced to advance in the direction of Agra. For some days their destination was uncertain—the road along which they were advancing would lead equally to Agra or to Delhi. The road led from the south-west. At a spot, some sixty miles, I think, from Agra, it divided into two branches. Here the brigade halted.

The military authorities now spoke, and they spoke in a manner that compelled attention. Their remonstrances were also supported by a few of the higher civilians, who had at length begun to doubt the wisdom of the Government policy. To this double pressure Mr. Colvin yielded. He authorised the fort being put in defence and provisioned for a six months' siege. The

orders were issued against Mr. Drummond's advice; he did his best to render them nugatory. He issued a counter order, that anyone selling grain or provisions to the Commissariat contractor should be punished. He sentenced one trader to imprisonment for doing so. The others were frightened; the contractor was compelled to procure his supplies from a distance. His great resources alone enabled him to obtain any; as it was he was unable to get more than half the amount ordered, and of this much was of an inferior quality.

That such an act should have been possible illustrates more than any words the confusion prevailing—the collapse of controlling authority. I should have been inclined to doubt the truth of the statement, had I not myself seen a copy of Mr. Drummond's order, and the record of the trader's conviction.

The military authorities recommended not only that the fort should be provisioned and put in defence, but that the women, children, and non-combatants should be at once sent into it. The prudence of this advice was subsequently universally acknowledged, but in spite of their remonstrances they were then unable to get it adopted. Mr. Colvin's civil advisers still had faith in their opposite policy of relying on the moral effect of a display of confidence. Eventually a compromise was effected. The women and non-combatants were to enter the fort, but not till the enemy approached nearer, nor even then with more than a specified amount of baggage. With a pedantry which, under the circumstances might have been thought inconceivable, the size of the boxes was regulated to inches. The military in vain urged on Mr. Colvin that the movements of the mutineers could not be accurately foreseen. They might advance more rapidly than was calculated on, and in

such case the movement of our troops would be most seriously hampered by the presence of the women and non-combatants. They further urged that it was useless to affect a confidence which the fact of our placing the fort in defence showed that we did not really feel, and that it would be wiser, by sending all movable property into the fort, to remove from the city mobs the temptation to plunder; but all this they urged in vain.

So far as could be afterwards ascertained the Neemuch Brigade did not intend to attack Agra, nor would they have done so but for the invitation of Mr. Drummond's Mohammedan officials. These men, emboldened by the support they had received from the higher civil authorities, had of late carried on their plots against our Government with extreme audacity. They printed rebel proclamations in the 'Police Press,' they corresponded with Delhi, and they now opened communications with the advancing enemy.

The leaders of the rebels were as disunited as ours. Their force consisted of two divisions—one of the divisions had acquired considerable plunder, and was desirous of proceeding with it to Delhi. The other had not been so fortunate, and the Sepoys composing it were inclined to enrich themselves with the contents of the Agra treasury. After much debate their counsels carried the day, and the army took the road to Agra. A few marches brought them to Futtehpore Secree, a small town, or rather village, not much more than twenty miles from Agra. There they again halted, and renewed their debates. The nearer they approached the English troops the less they liked the prospect of engaging them. They had also begun to entertain doubts as to the amount of treasure they should obtain at Agra, even if they succeeded in capturing it.

From Futtehpore Secree a road branched off that led to Delhi through Muttra. The commanders of the rebel forces were very much disposed to take it.

The advance of the enemy had not caused union in the Agra councils, but rather increased the discord. Each proposed measure of defence was angrily debated, and, when carried, clogged with restrictions that rendered it almost useless.

The Kotah contingent, as I have related, was called in, but opposite counsels prevailing, it was not allowed to cross the river. The women and non-combatants were not permitted to enter the fort, and the same infatuated confidence continued to be reposed in the native police and the Mohammedan officials.

An incident had lately occurred that ought to have shaken this confidence. The gaol at Agra contained about five thousand prisoners, many of them desperate characters. The outbreak of the prisoners was justly dreaded as one of the most serious of possible dangers. The gaol was guarded by what had once been a local battalion, the men of which still retained something of their military organisation. They were armed with muskets, wore uniform, and were disciplined in a sort of way. They were under the authority of the superintendent of the gaol, who was a medical officer of some standing.

The superintendent became distrustful of his guard. He presently received information that satisfied him that they intended to mutiny. He sought an interview with Mr. Colvin, and obtained from him the promise that a detachment of English soldiers should be marched down, and the guard disarmed. Before issuing the order Mr. Colvin consulted his other advisers. Instead of disarming the guard they persuaded him to remove

the superintendent upon the plea that he was an alarmist.

The next day the guard mutinied, but their mutiny was not followed by the consequences that had been anticipated. They did not release the prisoners, or commit any outrages. They quietly crossed the river, marched towards the east, and, like so many other of the mutineers, were never heard of after.

What the gaol guard had done there was little doubt in the minds of any but the civil authorities that the police intended to do.

When the news arrived that the enemy were at Futtehpore Secree, the Government awoke at last to all the dangers of their situation, and, as often happens in such cases, over-confidence gave place to sudden panic. Mr. Colvin left Government House, and took up his residence with the General. His example was followed by most of the residents in the civil lines. The women and children were sent into the fort, and, much against the advice of some of the highest officials, civil and military, the Kotah contingent was brought over the river, and encamped on one of the parade grounds.

The contingent was hardly encamped before the Government regretted having brought it over. They feared the men intended to mutiny. They adopted a precaution that was almost certain to insure their doing so. They sent an order for the force to separate. The artillery was directed to proceed to one place, the cavalry to another, and the infantry to a third.

To enforce this order only a small body of mounted militia were sent. The contingent, though sullenly, began to obey. They struck their tents and loaded their baggage, and then, as the word was given to 'march,' they broke out into open mutiny. The troopers

raised the cry of 'Deen, Deen! The faith! The faith!' and rode at their officers, discharging their carbines as they did so. Probably none of the officers nor the militia would have escaped but for the occurrence of one of those unforeseen events which in fiction appear improbable, but which in real life do occasionally happen and change the expected course of affairs. The clouds had been gathering, and as the troopers raised their cry the storm burst with all the fury of a tropical tempest. It blew a hurricane, and the rain descended in blinding torrents. For some minutes all was confusion; then the force was seen making off as fast as they could, utterly cowed by the storm and an alarm that the English soldiers were approaching.

Of this panic the militia took advantage. They charged, killed several of the Sepoys, took more prisoners, and, what was more important, captured their guns and all their baggage. The volley of the cavalry had not taken effect; none of the officers were struck, though one had a narrow escape. He was amongst the troopers, and so great was the confusion that he was not aware they had mutinied. He galloped on with them till one of the men gave him a hint. He pulled up, the troop passed, and he rejoined his fellow-officers.

The English artilleryman was not so fortunate. He was a fine, powerful young man, in physical strength a match for a dozen of the Sepoys. When I first joined the contingent Captain Dennys took me through the camp. This young artilleryman was bending over, doing something to one of the guns. Several of the cavalry were clustered behind him. I was struck by the contrast of their figures. At the same time, the thought occurred to me how little his great strength would avail

him should one of the men behind put a carbine to his head.

Curiously enough, the fate I thus imagined was the one that actually befell him. He was standing by his gun, when a trooper rode up behind, put a carbine to his head, and fired, as the young man, all unconscious, was gazing in another direction.

The militia returned in triumph with their spoils and prisoners. The prisoners were made over to the General. Taken red-handed in mutiny and attempted murder of their officers, it was supposed they would then and there be shot. The General contented himself by adjudging them no severer punishment than three months' leave of absence.

The mutiny of the contingent was followed by that of Syfoollah Khan's regiment of irregular cavalry, that rabble he was engaged in raising when, as the reader may remember, I passed the day in his company at Furrah on my return to Muttra.

This collection of vagabonds, for they merited no other name, after plundering villages and committing innumerable outrages in the Muttra and the Agra district, had been of late called in to aid in the defence of the station. They were encamped a mile or two beyond it. An officer was sent to bring them in still nearer. To the order to move they replied by an intimation that it was their intention to proceed in another direction. To the next demand to give up their two cannons they answered by recommending the officer to leave their camp. He thought himself fortunate that he was able to do so, and to bring with him the two English artillerymen.

The enemy remained encamped at Futtehpore Secree for nearly a week. The engineers at Agra took advantage of the delay to hurry on the defences of the

fort. The other authorities spent the time in quarrelling and opposing every rational scheme for meeting the threatened danger.

The number of the enemy was about five thousand, exclusive of the contingent and Syfoollah's horse, should these join them. Our troops, regulars and volunteers, were not above a fifth of that amount. The station of Agra was of great extent, covering an area of many square miles. It was interspersed with villages and bazaars, whose population might be regarded as hostile. The gaol was also a danger, and a still greater danger was the police. Mr. Colvin was entreated again to disarm and disband them. He was also advised to release the prisoners, and send them over the river; from whence, as some of the pontoons were removed from the bridge, they could not return. The women and children were already sent into the fort. Mr. Colvin was strongly advised to allow the other non-combatants to join them, and also to permit the English and Christians to send their property within the fort walls for security.

All these sensible recommendations Mr. Colvin's advisers persuaded him to reject. The utmost that they could be induced to concede was that the English and Christians should be admitted within the fort, if the mutineers advanced to attack the station. The signal for their admission was to be the discharge of three guns from the ramparts.

The long halt of the enemy gave rise to hopes that, after all, they might not attack us. It was the belief of the natives that they would have continued their march to Delhi but for the action of the Agra Mohammedan officials. One of these, the superintendent of the police, paid a visit to the mutineers' camp, and had an interview with the rebel commanders. What passed was

never known, but immediately on his departure the order was issued to strike the tents and advance on Agra. The mutineers marched all night, and arrived the next morning at a little village named Sasootiah, situated about three miles from the western limits of the station, and not very far from the town, or rather suburb, of Shahgunge, and here they put themselves into position.

CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE OF SHAHGUNGE.—BATTLE ITSELF.

When the news reached the General of the arrival of the enemy, he determined to go out and attack them. The more experienced of his officers endeavoured to dissuade him; they thought it would be better to take up a strong position and await their advance; they thought also that if left alone the mutineers would probably retire.

The younger officers were for the bolder course—the General, who did not want for courage, decided to adopt it.

Finding him resolved to fight, the older officers advised him to make the battle an artillery one, to take out the heavy guns from the fort, and drive the enemy out of their position. But to get these guns would take time, and the General was too eager to be off to brook the delay. He decided to move out with his field battery alone, he was too impatient to wait even for the full supply of ammunition. He set off with what he had at hand, which was about half the proper amount—the rest he directed to be sent after him.

The news of the arrival of the enemy had not reached Agra till late in the morning; the preparations, such as they were, had occupied time. It was nearly one in the afternoon before our troops commenced their march. They consisted of one regiment of English soldiers, the

Agra mounted militia, and a single battery of field artillery. The place where the enemy were encamped was nearly five miles from that part of the cantonments from whence the force set out; it was past three o'clock before they came in sight of the enemy.

The English soldiers arrived much exhausted—the heat was terrible; and, for some unaccountable reason, they had been clothed in their winter uniforms of thick cloth. They were, nevertheless, in good spirits, and eager to attack the enemy.

The village in which the mutineers were posted was slightly elevated above the plain—the elevation was so slight as to be hardly perceptible; but such as it was, it served to give the enemy an advantage in firing, and also to conceal their movements on the other side. To the left of the village was a grove of trees, and in this they had placed half their artillery. The other half was on the right. In attacking natives, it has often been found the best plan to go straight at them. They have a great fear of English soldiers, and seldom stand their charge. This plan the General was recommended to adopt. He preferred, however, to make the battle an artillery one, although by leaving behind the heavy guns he had deprived himself of the means of rendering such a mode of attack successful.

When about a quarter of a mile from the rebels, he halted and opened fire. The enemy returned it. After a round or two had been fired it was perceived that our balls fell short; the enemy were out of range, we had halted too soon.

On this the guns were limbered up and an advance made; when nearer the enemy a halt was again called, the artillery ordered to commence firing, and the English soldiers to lie flat on their faces. A more injudicious

proceeding could hardly have been devised. The regiment had been recently raised, the men were mostly young recruits not yet thoroughly disciplined, none of them had been in action, and to be exposed to a fire they were not permitted to return is trying even to the most experienced soldiers.

At the approach of our troops the rebel skirmishers had retired into the village. Seeing our men lying down in place of charging, they took courage, came out of the village, and commenced to fire. At the same time their cavalry appeared from behind the grove of trees, as if about to attack us in flank. Our militia horse rode boldly at them, and though far inferior in numbers, and as a rule much worse mounted, succeeded in driving them back after a short encounter. But not till a portion of them had charged through our guns on our left. Our artillery, like that of the mutineers, was posted on either flank. As we had only one battery it was divided. Two guns on the right, two on the left; through these last the rebels charged. Had they had pluck they might have captured them, and with the capture of these guns the rest of our force would have been almost at their mercy. But Captain Alfred Pearson, the officer commanding, kept his men together. And the rebels seeing this, and that their comrades had turned, hastened to join them. All fled together precipitately, and took shelter behind the village.

Seeing them fly, one of his officers rode up to the General and entreated him to let the English soldiers charge; he guaranteed that if allowed to do so they would take the village. The General so far yielded as to permit the men to stand up and return the enemy's fire, but to the request to allow them to charge he turned a deaf ear.

From the commencement of the engagement, it was apparent that the mutineer artillery was superior to our own. They had also the advantage of position. It was now perceived that they had got our range. When the range has once been found by the enemy, it is the practice to move the guns. The officer commanding the artillery was about to do so, when the fatal shots arrived. A discharge of grape poured into our right half battery. Captain Doyly fell mortally wounded.

At the same time, or I believe a little before, shots had struck the left half battery. The first dismounted one of our guns, smashing the carriage to pieces, another blew up one of the tumbrels. It was due then, and before, to Captain Pearson that the disaster of that day was not a worse one. His men, many of them wounded, some mortally—horses dropping around—he continued to fight his guns till the supply of ammunition gave out, and he was compelled to cease firing for want of the powder and ball that in his eagerness and over-confidence the General had left to follow him.

There was nothing now left but to storm the village or to retire. The General was entreated, almost implored, to let the soldiers charge. From all accounts, had he allowed them to do so he would probably have obtained a victory. The enemy appeared cowed by the sight of the English soldiers, they had begun to retire again into the village, and to shoot from the cover of the huts. Some of their cavalry were perceived to be moving off in the rear. But the General possessed the obstinacy as well as the incapacity of age; he would neither allow the soldiers to charge, nor would he permit them to retire out of range, and there await the arrival of his ammunition, which could not now be far distant. To the shame and indignation of his men and officers he gave the

order to retreat. He gave the order not from cowardice, for he was personally brave, nor from confusion, for throughout he was cool and collected—his conduct was the result of simple incapacity.

The order given, slowly and reluctantly it was obeyed—as regarded the conveyance of the wounded, not without difficulty. In the same manner as the General had omitted to take the proper supply of ammunition, so had he neglected other arrangements. There were no water-carriers, nor the requisite amount of bearers for the dhoolies, nor had the usual precautions been adopted to prevent those there were from deserting. Many had run off during the engagement. Almost worse than the deficiency of bearers was the want of water-carriers. Wounds are succeeded by agonising thirst—there was no water to relieve it.

The last to leave the ground were Captain Pearson and his artillery. In retiring the General appeared to have forgotten them; he sent them no orders, he took no measures for their protection. Captain Pearson had to get away his guns as best he could, and with such volunteer assistance as he could obtain.

As our troops retired the mutineer cavalry re-appeared from behind the village, and made a feint of attacking. Our men faced about, and our militia horse charged. As they charged the enemy fell back, but advanced as soon as our troops re-commenced their retreat, and again threatened to attack. When our soldiers faced round the enemy retired as before, repeating their threat of attacking as soon as our march was resumed. In this manner they continued to hang on the rear of our force, obliging it continually to halt and face about, till the outskirts of the station were reached.

The road here ran between a large house, known as the 'Mofussilite Press,' from being occupied by the establishment of a newspaper of that name, and some rather high sandhills. The position was a strong one, and the General was advised to halt and occupy it. But to this advice he paid as little attention as he had to all the other recommendations he had previously received. Instead of halting, and awaiting the advance of the rebels, he continued his retreat, and he now informed the troops that he intended to retire into the fort.

The arrangement of the Government had been that when our troops marched out against the mutineers, the police should keep order in the city and station. In pursuance of this arrangement, Mr. Drummond had gone in the morning to the head police station to issue the necessary orders. Then occurred what everyone but himself and the Government had predicted—the police broke out into open mutiny. What Mr. Drummond could have done I do not know, what he did do was thought singular. He gave the whole force leave of absence, and also permission to carry away with them their arms and ammunition. What was thought still more singular, and was certainly most unexpected, of this permission the police quietly availed themselves. They did not plunder, they did not riot, they shouldered their muskets, hung their bundles of clothes on the barrels, and marched away to their different homes—all but a hundred or so, who remained in the city and joined the mobs that presently collected.

When the gaol guard mutinied their place had been supplied by a fresh body of men raised for the purpose. These men were placed under the immediate control of one of the Mohammedan officials.

When our troops marched out, this man and one of

his subordinates ascended the great gateway of the gaol, and sat on the flat roof to listen. After a time they heard a boom, as of distant cannon; it was followed by a fainter noise, which sounded like the rattle of musketry. They concluded that the battle had begun. The commencement of the battle was the signal agreed on. The two men descended to the courtyard, assembled the guard, and proceeded to release the prisoners, having first themselves plundered the treasure chest.

The conduct of the prisoners, like that of the police, was different from what had been anticipated. Like the police they committed hardly any outrages, and went peaceably off to their homes. Those whose homes were in the east made for the bridge, to reach which they had to pass through the city.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon, the time when the streets are most crowded, that groups of prisoners began to appear. Their appearance and the clanking of their chains excited consternation; it was supposed to indicate that our government was overthrown. The shopkeepers hastily removed their goods to within their shops, closed their shutters, and hurried off to their homes. As the respectable portion of the inhabitants retired the rest rose, formed into mobs, and proceeded to the station to burn and plunder.

Early in the morning most of the English and Eurasians had entered the fort; I mean, of course, those who did not belong to the army, and who had not entered the militia. An order had been issued, as I have stated, that admittance into the fort was not to be permitted till the signal of three guns had been fired, but like many other orders issued at that time this one was not strictly attended to.

Many families, however, still remained in their houses waiting the result of the battle, which no one supposed would be otherwise than in our favour. It had scarcely commenced before a report spread that our troops were retreating; this was followed by a panic and a general stampede to the fort. The approaches were soon blocked by a mass of horses and vehicles, and the gates besieged by a dense crowd frantic for admission.

Most of the residents of the station reached the fort in safety, a few who lived near the city were met by the mobs and murdered. In every instance the murderers were the mutinous police, those few of that force who had remained and joined the rioters.

The mobs presently became bolder; they advanced into the English station, and they had already begun to congregate on the main road, when the General and our troops entered it on their retreat. The militia observing them, one of their officers rode up to the General and asked permission to disperse them. He engaged to do so if a small troop were allowed him, and in this he did not promise more than he could easily have performed. The General sternly ordered him back to his men, and forbade him to leave them again at his peril.

The mobs imputed this forbearance to fear, and became themselves encouraged. As our army retired they followed, plundering the houses of the English, occasionally setting fire to them. It was nearly dark when our soldiers reached the fort. They entered it exhausted with thirst and fatigue, for they had marched and fought for many hours exposed to the terrible heat of an Indian July sun. They found nothing prepared—not even for the wounded. The night that followed is one for sad remembrance in our annals. As the darkness fell, from every direction fires began to rise; the fort, on its land

side, was ere long encompassed by a wall of smoke and flame.

The mutineer cavalry did not continue their pursuit beyond the sandhills, but at the time this was not known. It was supposed that they entered the station, and that the entire rebel army was following. The flames appeared to confirm this belief. During the early hours of the night an attack on the fort was momentarily expected. It was perhaps fortunate that one was not made. Our soldiers would have fought as English soldiers are wont to fight; but so commanded, and in the confusion that prevailed, they might nevertheless have fought unsuccessfully.

Imminent as the danger was considered hardly any preparations were made to meet it; there was no head, no order—even the most ordinary precautions were neglected. I was told afterwards that the gate towards the river was left open and unguarded the livelong night.

The confusion that prevailed words can hardly describe. No accommodation had been provided for the mass of the English and Christians. They had fled in at the last moment, some with a few clothes, many with only their lives; they found themselves without food, without shelter. The charity was as great as the distress; all who had room to spare took in the less fortunate. But many, notwithstanding, spent the night wandering through the squares and open spaces, with no shelter from the torrents of rain save the blind arches of the ramparts.

No provision had been made for the wounded. A hospital was hastily improvised in the arcade of one of the courts. The surgeons did not spare themselves; all that their skill and attention could do was done. But

the attendance was defective and the supply of water insufficient. To the pain of wounds and amputations was added the anguish of thirst.

Before long the doors of the court were surrounded by a crowd of women, the wives of the sufferers. Why, I know not, but they were refused admission. They would not leave, they could not be forced away; their sobs and lamentations formed a sad echo to the groans within.

I was told by some who were in the fort that night that beyond the distress, beyond the anxiety, the feeling of most of the English was one of shame and humiliation. Our troops before this had suffered reverses, they had been on occasions overpowered by numbers, they had been compelled to retire before insurmountable obstacles, but a retreat such as the present was hitherto unknown.

This feeling, according to rumour, the General did not share; he was a brave, a kind, an honourable man, but the same age that had dulled his capacities had blunted his sensibilities. He entered the fort quite unconcerned at the humiliation his arms had sustained, repaired to his comfortable quarters, ate his dinner, and at his usual hour retired placidly to bed, quite satisfied that he had thoroughly performed his duty.

While the hours passed thus within the fort, the station was given up to anarchy without. All night the mobs roamed through it, plundering, burning, and murdering such Christians as fell in their way. One only they spared; he was an Eurasian, and had formerly held a high position in the accountant's office. He was eccentric, and much given to intemperance. When his neighbours fled to the fort he remained drinking, and was still doing so when the mob entered. On seeing them he exhibited neither surprise nor alarm, but

welcomed them as guests, and invited them to share his liquor, and assisted them in destroying his own furniture. Regarding him as a lunatic, the rioters left him unharmed, influenced by that compassionate reverence which in the East insanity inspires. The disorder that prevailed in the station did not extend to the city—that remained perfectly tranquil.

When day dawned the news came that the rebel army had marched away to Muttra. This intelligence filled all the well-to-do citizens with terror. They imagined that the English troops would presently issue from the fort, and take vengeance on the city for the destruction of the station and for the murders and outrages that had been committed on the Christians. Some of the chief inhabitants met together, and decided to send a deputation to Mr. Colvin to declare their loyalty, profess their innocence, and to offer their assistance in restoring order.

The deputation had just started, when they met several servants returning from the fort. The servants informed them that they had been to join their masters, but as they approached the gate they had been shot at by the soldiers from behind the palisades. The deputation thought the same thing might happen to themselves, and judged it most prudent to return to their own homes. There they remained, as did the rest of the city, for some hours in great trepidation, expecting each instant the arrival of the English soldiers, or a fall of shot and shell from the batteries.

But when the day passed, and neither soldiers appeared nor shells fell, they began to think that we were afraid, and their own courage revived. The same citizens who in the morning had set out to profess their devotion to our Government, in the evening assembled

in the great mosque and proclaimed the King of Delhi. And at the same time, or soon afterwards, the leading Mohammedans also proclaimed the 'Jehád,' or the 'holy war against unbelievers.' They proceeded to wage it against the Christians only. Such as they found in the city they murdered; they spared neither age nor sex. Many of the victims were women, many were children; with one or two exceptions, all were natives. The murders were committed with the greatest deliberation in the open streets, and in the presence of the better class of the inhabitants and the Government officials, who looked quietly and approvingly on from their windows and balconies. Not many were, indeed, killed, but this was merely because there were but few to kill, for nearly the entire Christian population had taken refuge within the walls of the fort.

For these murders the Government was in no degree responsible. All who fell had remained outside the fort deliberately and of their own accord. Natives themselves, they thought they were safe among their countrymen. With two exceptions, they were persons of the humblest rank. Of these exceptions, one was Major Jacobs. His murder strongly illustrated the extent to which the fanaticism of the Mohammedans had been aroused.

In all but name Major Jacobs was a native; what slight infusion of European blood ran in his veins was French. His family had been settled for some generations at Gwalior, and had held high commands in Scindiah's army. The Major himself had fought against us at Maharajpore. His Mohammedan servants persuaded him not to enter the fort. The next day they murdered him.

For three days the mob continued to roam through

the station, burning and destroying. But in the city, save that the Christians were murdered, there was no disorder. Even in the station the residences of Hindoos and Mohammedans were scrupulously unmolested. On the fourth day our troops issued, and the authority of the English Government was restored.

NOTE.—Since the above account of the battle was written I have been informed by an officer who was present that the supply of ammunition with which the artillery started was that ordinarily taken, and that it would have been sufficient had not the General, by his inaction, compelled it to be so uselessly expended. Still, I believe it is quite true, as I have stated, that more ammunition was ordered to follow, and that the General refused to delay his retreat for its arrival.

I should add, that the same officer tells me that I must have been misinformed as to any proposal for taking out the heavy guns, as the doing so, under the circumstances, was impossible.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEPARTURE OF THE ENEMY.

THE mutineers having reached Muttra appeared in no hurry to quit it. They settled themselves on the parade ground, visited the temples and bathing-places, and each day their chief officers held levées, to which all the country flocked in and attended. Presently they expressed their intention to return and besiege us, and a very alarming rumour spread at the same time that the Gwalior contingent was coming to help them. The Gwalior contingent was a formidable force, and it also possessed a battering train. If it came with its heavy guns our position would be very serious.

I do not know if the authorities believed in the danger—they certainly made no preparations to meet it. They did not get in supplies, they did not make sanitary arrangements, they did not even push on the work of completing the defences.

Mr. Colvin remained confined to his apartments—it was given out he was ill, and the General seldom left his quarters. It was said he saw no necessity for doing so; as long as the guards were posted and the routine duties performed he was perfectly satisfied. Meanwhile, a dangerous discontent was manifesting itself throughout the fort. As the details of the battle and of the subsequent events became known, a feeling of rage and indignation

was aroused against the authorities, by whose mismanagement the catastrophe had been occasioned.

Popular anger usually centres on some one individual; it fell now on Mr. Drummond. There arose a nearly universal cry for his removal; to this demand Mr. Colvin was not disposed to yield. Whatever Mr. Drummond had done had received his direct or tacit approval, as well as that of the chief civil officials; and the ultimate failure of his plans was due very much to a cause for which he was in no way answerable—namely, the incapacity of the General.

Mr. Drummond was equally faithful to his own subordinates; they were neither dismissed nor was their conduct investigated, nor were any efforts made to discover and punish the instigators and perpetrators of the murders and outrages. Those who had suffered, whose property had been destroyed, or whose relations had been killed, began to talk of taking vengeance, as the authorities did not appear disposed to afford them justice. It was generally felt that it was neither due to the dignity of our Government nor consistent with our own safety that the present state of things should continue. It was believed that Mr. Colvin was no longer capable of conducting the Government. The propriety of setting him aside began to be openly discussed.

It was while things were in this state that I had occasion one day to see Mr. Colvin. Mr. Colvin resided in a corner of our square that overlooked the river; his apartments were separated from the garden by a screen composed of slabs of white marble. A servant raised a curtain that hung before the doorway and admitted me into a pretty court; it was paved with white marble, and on the other side rose a fantastic-looking building, composed of the same material, and surmounted by cupolas

thickly overlaid with gold. Curtains were hung before the arches; the servant drew one aside and I entered a long room, half filled with books and furniture that lay piled in heaps upon the floor and against the walls. Three officers were seated at the end of the room; one of them rose, begged me to take a chair, and retired through a small doorway. He presently returned and informed me that Mr. Colvin would see me, and requested me to accompany him into the next apartment.

We passed through the doorway, which was low and narrow, and very deep, and entered a large hall; the roof was arched, the walls of enormous thickness, and broken by many recesses. The hall was lighted by a single window, which appeared to look out on the river. The window had no glass, but in its place was a delicate tracery of white marble. The tracery broke the light, the vast thickness of the walls subdued the glare, the sunshine, reflected from the sky and water, entered faintly tinged with blue.

The hall, like the outer room, was filled with furniture piled together in extreme confusion; a heap of books lay on the floor, near them was a large round table. Beside it, in an arm-chair, was seated Mr. Colvin—an open book lay before him on the table, his head was bent over it as if he was perusing it.

The officer advanced, mentioned my name, and retired. As I approached Mr. Colvin raised his head, shook hands, and desired me to be seated. His manner was very gentle, his voice subdued. I had brought a note from Colonel Fraser; he glanced at it, laid it on the table, and asked me to tell him what I had to say.

For some little while he listened attentively, then gradually his eyes fell on the book before him, though he

did not appear to be reading. When I had finished speaking he remained still in the same attitude, and so for some minutes we continued, Mr. Colvin bending over his book motionless as a figure of wax, I seated beside him. I had just quitted a noisy scene at one of the barracks, where the state of things in the fort had been angrily debated. After that noisy assemblage, the silence and stillness of this apartment were very impressive. No sound from without penetrated the massive walls, there was no movement within. The subdued light, the shadows in the deep recesses, added to the feeling of repose.

Presently Mr. Colvin raised his head—he seemed by an effort to collect his thoughts—and began to speak about the subject of my visit. That disposed of he chatted a little on ordinary topics, and I took my leave. At the doorway I turned to bow, and I saw that he had again bent over his book, and his attitude and features had assumed their former expression of weariness and abstraction.

The next morning it was announced that Mr. Drummond had been removed from his appointment. It was said that some of the chief officials had waited on Mr. Colvin the previous afternoon, and given him the choice of removing Mr. Drummond or being himself superseded; and from what my brother at times let fall, I think that something of the kind must really have taken place. My brother thought that Mr. Drummond's removal had become necessary, but at the same time that he was hardly treated, for whatever he had done had been done with the approval of his superiors.

The mutineers remained nearly a fortnight at Muttra, keeping us very uneasy by their threats of returning. Then some intelligence reached them that produced a

sudden commotion among their leaders. In a few hours they struck their tents, and marched away to Delhi.

When the news of their departure reached us an incubus seemed removed, the authorities woke up and began to undertake those measures for defence and for preserving health and order that ought long before to have been completed. In a few days the appearance of the fort was changed, in a fortnight it hardly seemed the same place; from a very Augean stable of filth and confusion it had become a model of cleanliness and arrangement.

Our residence in the fort was a long one—it was a period of some danger, of much discomfort, but perhaps, from its very strangeness, not devoid of attraction. Some description of it may interest the reader. I will note some of the incidents I can recall to recollection without, however, preserving always the order in which they occurred. But first, before I describe our life in the fort, let me endeavour to give the reader an idea of the fort itself.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FORT OF AGRA.

THE river Jumna runs beneath a lofty bank, in places scored into ravines by the rains of ages. From these ravines occasionally rise up great mounds—on one of these stands the fort of Agra. The fort is coeval with the city, and of unknown antiquity; the existing edifice does not, however, date beyond the sixteenth century. The walls and gateways were erected by the Emperor Akbar about the commencement of the reign of our Elizabeth; the interior buildings are mostly the work of his grandson Shah-Jehan, and were not constructed till a century later.

The term 'fort' is rather misleading. The building would be more correctly described as a castle, which was the designation applied to it by our early travellers, for it is not a mere military stronghold, but, like Windsor, the embattled residence of the sovereign. As a castle it differs greatly, as do all the Indian castles, from those of Europe; the walls are separate from the residence and they do not rise from the mound, but enclose it. Viewed from the road that skirts the outer ditch, nothing can exceed its massive grandeur; seen at a greater distance its appearance is less imposing—its immense length detracts from its height, and the towers, not rising above the wall, render the outline tame and monotonous.

The side that faces the river is far more beautiful. The outer defences are here very extensive—when the river is full they reach to the water's edge. They rise tier over tier, with battlements, embrasures, and projecting bastions, very magnificent. Behind, and towering far above them, stretches the vast red wall of the fort itself. Its outline is varied by lofty towers, its summit crowned with pavilions of white marble, whose roofs and cupolas are overlaid with burnished gold. Seen from beneath, the building realises every idea of an enchanter's palace; below, an impregnable castle, above, the bowers of the fairies.

This appearance of strength, once a reality, is now a delusion; a battery across the river would soon bring down these lofty walls, and the knowledge of this occasioned us at times a good deal of anxiety. The upper portion of the wall is pierced with windows; one expects to find behind them halls and galleries; it is disappointing, on entering, to discover that they light only gloomy vaults, winding stairs, and narrow subterranean passages. The habitable portion of the building is confined to the line of pavilions that crown the summit.

The palaces of India differ from those of Europe as much as do the castles; on a first visit they are to an English traveller equally disappointing; they appear a mere confused collection of cells, gateways, courtyards, and summer-houses. It is not till later that the visitor recognises the conformity of the design to the use—the absolute perfection of construction and ornamentation.

The palaces of the Indian emperors were built on one uniform plan, which, though apparently complicated, when once understood is very simple. It could not, however, be made intelligible without drawings and elaborate explanations. It will be sufficient to say that

the palace proper consisted of a succession of courtyards and pavilions, extending along one side of the fortress and terminating in a garden, the remainder of the space within the walls being occupied by the public offices, and the residences of the great officials attached to the Court, and of the servants, guards, and attendants, whose numbers amounted to many thousands. In fact, the exterior walls of the fortress enclosed within them a complete city, whose buildings presented every gradation of splendour, from the marble pavilions of the Emperor to the mud hovels of the lower attendants.

The fort of Agra extends along the river for a distance—I speak from memory—of nearly half a mile; it is terminated by two enormous circular towers, which, as they do not rise above the level of the ramparts, are in military phraseology styled bastions. The one at the southern extremity of the fort is known as the 'Tower of Bengal,' from its facing towards that region; the designation of the northern tower I forget. Between these two towers, but on a lower level, are the series of buildings that constitute the palace. It would be more correct to say 'were,' for many of the buildings have disappeared, among them the Zenana of the Emperor Akbar, which, when it existed, was known by the fanciful appellation of 'The Palace of the Fish.' It was situated immediately beneath the 'Tower of Bengal.' Some broken arches, a few ruined walls, and a well of vast dimensions alone remain to indicate its site.

Passing these ruins, we come to the palace of Jehangire, an immense building of dark red stone, gloomy and massive, but from age and neglect beginning to show signs of decay. Beyond the palace of Jehangire is the courtyard and surrounding edifices, in which at present we are residing; it is known among the English

as the 'Palace Square;' by the natives it is termed 'The Pearl Zenana' and the 'Garden of the Vine:' the former epithet being bestowed as descriptive of the lustrous whiteness of its marble pavilions, the latter from a former tradition that around one of the columns once clustered the tendrils of the golden vine, whose grapes of emeralds and rubies illustrated the magnificence of its constructor, the Emperor Shah Jehan.

Our square I have already described. We will pass on to the next enclosure; it is reached by a narrow staircase, and consists only of a small court surrounded by a screen of white marble; but it contains within it the gem of the palace, what without exaggeration may be termed one of the architectural jewels of the world. This is an octagon turret of two storeys, surmounted by a fairy-like cupola thickly overlaid with gold.

The architecture is very beautiful, but the glory of the structure lies in its material; the walls and columns are of white marble, and the whiteness of the marble is relieved by borders of flowers executed in coloured mosaics, and the mosaics are composed of agates, cornelians, lapis-lazuli, blood-stone, and other semi-precious gems. In the floors of the lower storey are basins and fountains; the water enters by a shallow canal, and escapes by a miniature cascade; through the limpid water gleam the white marble—the coloured mosaics.

Lord Ellenborough, when Governor-General, was so enchanted with the beauty of this turret, that for a short time he made it his residence, bestowing on it the name of Noor Jehan's Bower, from a mistaken idea that it had formerly been occupied by that Princess. It was not really erected till long after her decease.

The courtyard of this turret forms the limit of the ancient Zenana; a doorway in the marble screen leads

into the 'Dewân Khas,' or 'Private Hall of Audience,' fancifully termed by the English the 'Hall of Ambassadors.' A second doorway opens on a narrow staircase, steep and dark, cut in the solid thickness of the wall. The stairs descend lower, still lower; after many turns and windings the visitor stoops and passes through a low doorway; he rises, and finds himself in what appears a black void. The attendants raise their torches; there comes the reflection from a pale blue surface, and the sparkle as of a thousand gems; the ear catches the sound of a faint ripple—the gentle splash as of softly falling water. The visitor has entered that mysterious chamber known by the natives as the 'Crystal Hall,' by the English termed the 'Grotto of Jehangire.'

The 'Dewân Khas,' or 'Private Hall of Audience,' is situated at one end of a broad stone terrace overlooking the river. At the other, alas! is a vacant space; on it formerly stood a corresponding pavilion, which, according to tradition, was constructed of green marble, if there be such a substance; at all events, of some rare material. It has shared the fate of the Zenana of Akbar; it had become dilapidated; it was pulled down. The 'Dewân Khas' is of white marble, a large open room, whose flat roof is supported by a double row of slender twelve-sided columns.

The hall and the buildings which line the walls of its enclosing court have been assigned as the residence of the fugitives from Gwalior; on which account this portion of the palace is usually spoken of as the 'Gwalior Square'—an appellation which, after our leaving the fort, it still continued to retain.

In the centre of the terrace rests an interesting relic of the ancient days; it is an enormous slab of dark grey stone, beautifully polished, and the edges are orna-

mented by a raised inscription in the flowing Persian character. On this slab, in the evenings, the Emperor was accustomed to take his seat, and no less august footsteps were permitted to profane it. Across one angle of the surface runs a crack, near it is a crimson spot; regarding the origin of this crack and stain two stories are current, firmly credited even by the most educated natives.

The crack appeared a century ago, when Sooruj Mull, the Rajah of Bhurtpore, in the triumph of victory, placed his seat upon the throne; shocked at the indignity, the stone shivered. The crimson mark made its appearance when, some eighty years after, Lord Ellenborough placed upon the slab his chair of State; more deeply offended, the stone bled.

Beyond this 'Gwalior Square' are the ruins of the Emperor's baths, and succeeding them a very labyrinth of courts, enclosures, gateways, open spaces, and detached buildings—a labyrinth it would be tedious to describe; hopeless, if I did, to render my description intelligible. Worthy of special note only is one beautiful gateway and the private mosque of the Royal Princesses, which is reached by a secret passage from our square.

Going further to the north we come on the road that leads by a steep incline to the river entrance of the fortress, termed by the English the 'Water Gate,' by the natives known as the 'Hathee Pool,' or 'Portal of the Elephant,' so designated from the figures in bas-relief of two of those enormous quadrupeds that ornament the spandrels of the inner arch. This gateway, though smaller than the gateways on the land side, is yet in some respects even more imposing; it rises sheer from the bottom of the incline, narrow, massive, and lofty, suggesting the idea of impregnable strength.

Beyond this gateway the buildings diminish—they soon cease, a few detached edifices only appearing on a wide open space. One of these edifices is that enclosed court from whence, during the three days of our fancied siege, our rations were distributed; it is said to have been the ancient mint; somewhere near it was the palace garden; no trace of it remains—walls, canals, and pavilions have alike disappeared.

The northern bastion is very fine, and the view from its summit rather pretty; the river stretches before it, during the rainy season resembling a broad, straight lake. On the banks are picturesque ruins and groves of darkly foliaged trees. The appearance of the city is less pleasing; the houses, flat-roofed and dull coloured, resemble nothing so much as great square boxes. The city is so full of trees that, seen from this height, the further portions appear lost in a forest; above the margin of the forest rise the spires of the churches in the English station.

But to return to the palace. Before the 'Pearl Zenana' is a large square; it is entered by two handsome gateways, round three of its sides runs a low arcade, on the fourth side is the 'Dewân Am,' or 'Hall of Public Audience;' here the emperors daily sat in State, heard complaints, dispensed justice, and displayed their magnificence to their subjects, of whom all, even the commonest, might enter that liked. The hall is a long, and for its length rather a low, building; it was originally an open triple colonnade; it was converted by us, on our acquisition of Agra, into an enclosed gallery, by filling up the spaces between the outer columns.

In the centre of the inner wall is a small alcove, partly projecting from, partly recessed within the surface of the wall. The singularity of the structure now attracts

the attention of the visitor; two centuries ago his interest would have been absorbed by the object it contained. For on the floor of the alcove there rested the most costly article ever fabricated by the hand of man: the 'Tukt-i-Taoos,' the State seat of the emperors, the world-renowned 'Peacock Throne,' composed entirely of precious stones. It represented a peacock with outspread tail—the emeralds, the diamonds, the sapphires, and the rubies reproducing the tints of its many-coloured plumage.

Gorgeous as was the throne, as noon approached the polished marble of the alcove became irradiated with the reflection of an even greater splendour. At the back of the alcove is a small door; each morning, about eleven, it opened, and there issued through it, all one blaze of gold and diamonds, the monarch who, to our ancestors, was the very embodiment of earthly grandeur—the Great Mogul.

On State occasions the pageant this hall and square then displayed must have been the most magnificent this world has ever seen. The travellers Bernier and Tavernier both describe it; with the aid of their descriptions and native traditions in some faint degree we may picture it. The Emperor sat on his jewelled throne, above his head hung the golden canopy, fringed with pearls, encrusted with gems. Before him, to avert the evil eye, was suspended, by a golden thread, a single enormous diamond, perhaps the 'Koh-i-Noor.' Below the Emperor, on a marble slab that still exists, stood the 'Wuzzeer Azim,' the 'Grand Vizier' of our Eastern tales; and on either side were the officials of the palace, the nobles, guards, and the hundreds of attendants—the men who carried the golden spears, the golden clubs, and the golden maces.

The arcades around the square were hung with cloth of gold, and awnings of gold tissue were stretched before them, supported on silver poles. As the Emperor appeared the music sounded from the orchestra on the summits of the gateways, and the multitude broke forth into shouts of adoration, more fitting to hail the advent of a deity than the entrance of a mortal.

The ceremonies were commenced by a procession of the *élite* of the troops that guarded the palace, and the State horses, camels, and elephants—all gorgeously caparisoned. The elephants wore gold and silver trappings, and carried golden howdahs, and many of the troops were arrayed in those delicate suits of chain armour, with gold inlaid caps and breastplates, of which specimens may occasionally be seen in our European museums. The procession was preceded by men carrying the four insignia of royalty—the Mahè, the Muratib, the Chutter, and the Chour; that is, the 'Golden Fish, the 'Golden Sun,' the 'Golden Umbrella,' and the snow-white tail of the Thibetan ox set in its golden handle.

The hall had of late years been used as an armoury, and the walls and columns were hung with flags and weapons very prettily arranged. The celebrated Somnath gates stood at the northern end; they were said to be constructed of sandal-wood, but its appearance was much that of ordinary deal. If the wood had ever possessed any scent it had long departed. The gates and the arms had just now been removed, and the hall was occupied as a barrack by the English regiment.

On the land side the fort has two gateways—the Delhi gate and the Ummer Sing gate. It was before the Delhi gate that I stood on the morning of my arrival. It was by the Ummer Sing gate that I entered. Seen from the interior of the fort the Delhi gate, in size and

construction, gives the idea of a palace. It possesses in absolute perfection that combination of lightness and solidity that so especially distinguishes the architecture of its builder, the Emperor Akbar. The walls are massive as a rock, the cupolas, parapets, and traceries are of gossamer delicacy. It is disappointing, on entering, to find that this immense edifice contains nothing beyond one or two moderate-sized rooms, a few cells, and some narrow staircases.

On the flat roof there is hung, suspended from a wooden frame, the largest gong I ever beheld; it is a solid disc of brass, at least a yard in diameter. It is said to be the same gong on which the hours were struck in the days of the emperors. If so, it is the one surviving relic of all the countless articles of use and luxury, of all the inestimable treasures the fortress once contained.

The Delhi gate is so called because the emperors issued from it on their progress to that city. The Ummer Sing gate records the name of a Hindoo chieftain who was killed within it. He had defied the Emperor in open audience; he fled, the guards pursued him. In the courtyard of the gateway, his back to the wall, he stood at bay; overpowered by numbers he fell. His wife implored his life—implored it in vain. Then she cursed his destroyers, and calling on the wall to bear witness to her malediction, she struck her arm against it; the stone yielded, and received the impression of her bracelet.

In corroboration of the legend a curious indentation is pointed out, which does certainly very exactly resemble the impression of one of those long, solid bracelets worn by native women. But the bracelet that made this indentation must have fitted the arm of a giantess.

There are other buildings besides those I have described, especially an immense range of enclosures near the Delhi gate. They do not, however, with one exception, possess much interest; that exception is the 'Motee Muzjeed,' or the 'Pearl Mosque,' but to do justice to this exquisite structure a separate chapter would be required.

The French traveller Tavernier visited the fort of Agra about the middle of our seventeenth century. The Court was absent, the Emperor being on one of his progresses, and the 'Killahdar,' or governor of the fortress, permitted Tavernier to enter a part of the palace. Tavernier saw the 'Peacock Throne' and also the 'Golden Vine,' and he mentions the name of the Portuguese artist who had constructed it. Tavernier describes what he saw apparently very accurately, but so much has the appearance of the interior been since changed by ruin and alterations, that I never could clearly make out either by which gateway he entered or into what portions of the palace he was admitted.

When Shah Jehan removed his capital to Delhi he carried the 'Peacock Throne' with him. For nearly a century it there remained, resting in a very similar marble alcove in the audience hall of the new palace. In the year 1745 it was carried away to Persia by Nadir Shah, on his capture of Delhi. The throne was broken up, some of the precious stones that composed it found their way back to India; but the greater portion are still in the possession of the Shah of Persia. The fate of the 'Golden Vine' is not recorded, and, strange to say, among the natives there is now no tradition of its existence that I know of.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LIFE IN THE FORT.

For the first few days after our entering it the fort had resembled a disturbed ants' nest. The courts and squares were filled with people asking and telling news, or bustling about with no definite object. We had now quieted down, and fallen into a sort of life very like that on board ship during a long voyage. There was the same monotony, the same sociability; I am sorry to add, also, the same gossip and quarrelling.

Through Colonel Fraser's kindness we had obtained better quarters; they were in a small pavilion of white marble overlooking the river—a fantastic little structure, surmounted by an oblong dome, thickly overlaid with gold. It was situated in an enclosure paved with white marble, and was separated from the rest of the square by a screen of tall slabs of the same material. In ancient times it had been the residence of some princess, and for such no doubt was well adapted. For an English family it was less suitable; it contained but three rooms, in size mere closets—two were assigned to us, the third was given to a lady from Gwalior, one of the many whom the mutiny had made widows. The heat of the rooms was beyond words, and the polished marble of the pavement reflected an almost blinding glare. To these discomforts were added a very plague of flies, and what

in such a building would not have been expected, of fleas also. The flies and the glare we managed in some degree to exclude by hanging curtains and erecting a verandah of reeds and thatch. But the fleas we could neither get rid of nor diminish—they were as numerous and annoying the last day of our residence as on the first. Where they came from was a mystery, as also was where they hid in the solid masonry, and on what they subsisted previous to our entrance.

But let me describe our life. We all rose early. Those who had horses or vehicles rode or drove—never, however, venturing far from the fort; the rest strolled about the squares or walked on the ramparts. By seven o'clock most of us had returned, by eight o'clock the palace had subsided into the sleepy quiet it maintained for the remainder of the day.

About four we dined, and dinner over, we rolled up the curtains and sat by the window till the diminishing glare enabled us to take our evening stroll.

From our window we looked on the river. Swollen by the rains, it resembled a broad, long lake ; below the fort the stream made so sharp a curve that the bank remained in sight for a considerable distance. It was lined with the ruins of what had once been palaces, but were now mere masses of shapeless masonry. Amid them, pure white and glistening, rose the 'Taj.' Contrasted with the mouldering walls beside it, it seemed the embodiment of youth and freshness, suggesting the idea of life amid decay. It was more than a mile from where we sat, but so clear was the atmosphere that every detail of its architecture was distinctly visible. We could see the delicate cupolas that cluster around the central dome, the coloured mosaics that adorn the walls, even the marble traceries that fill the windows. Beyond the river

was a green expanse of grass and rising crops, interspersed with groves of trees.

On one side of us was the marble hall, on the other rose the great mass of the octagon tower. We looked down some sixty feet on a wilderness of stone walls, gateways, ditches, and ramparts. It was a curious sensation, thus living perched on the battlements. It seemed almost as if time had gone back, and we were denizens of some mediæval castle.

Occasionally, towards sunset, the sky would be filled with rainbow tints, the white marble of the Taj would assume a rosy hue, the dull ruins be bathed in a purple light, and the river lie before us like a sheet of gold. But these beautiful effects were rare, the declining sun did not generally do more than suffuse a richer shade over the landscape and the sky.

We now drove out or strolled on the ramparts, and the garden of our square became filled with children. They had not the merriment or the rosy cheeks that in England we associate with infancy. Yet, sitting with their Ayahs by the fountain, or playing on the marble paths, they made a pretty sight; but a sight that raised sad reflections. Most of the little arms were encircled with a strip of black, a strip that proclaimed a loss of which the wearers were all unconscious; and the fate that had befallen parents, sisters, and brothers might be in store for them.

At dark the Ayahs led off their charges, and we, the elders, took their places. Chairs were placed on the terraces and tables arranged, charcoal fires began to glimmer, kettles to boil, and soon the square presented the appearance of a great tea garden. This was our time for social intercourse and enjoyment. The fare was as simple as the invitations, and each guest brought his

contribution, very often also his chair. Very charming were those evening gatherings, very pleasant they arise to memory. We talked, we chatted, often we sat silent, enjoying the slight coolness that the night had brought, gazing on the delicious moonlight. The Indian moonlight is always beautiful, but never before or since did its loveliness so impress me. It bathed the marble hall, the trees, and the buildings around, concealing all the marks of the ravages of time, all the present disorder, hiding them in one soft mysterious glow. When there was no moon our tables were lighted by little coloured lamps, and the square glistened with all the rich tints of a cathedral window.

Our talk usually commenced with the topics of the day; it often lapsed into subjects more interesting, more serious. We had flocked into the fort, from all parts of the country the communications had been so interrupted, that each knew but little of what had befallen the rest. We met like travellers in a fairy tale, like them we told our past adventures. We speculated on what in the future might befall us. As we talked, our conversation, our surroundings seemed to lift us above the petty cares, the dull routine of ordinary life, into a region of poetry and romance.

One thing I noticed—those that had been exposed to dangers or suffered hardships, privations, and loss of property, were ready enough to describe what they had gone through. But those who endured deeper sorrows rarely or never alluded to them.

We kept early hours; at nine o'clock the gun fired, soon after we retired to our rooms.

The reader may imagine that we must have been a sad party within the fort, and I suppose a novelist would so represent us. For danger hung over us all, and

many had endured much suffering and the loss of those nearest and dearest; and yet on the whole we were far from sad; on the contrary, rather cheerful. Our cheerfulness did not arise from insensibility. It was the result of the excitement of the time, and of the public life we were compelled to lead. None could be much alone to nurse their griefs, and the recollections of the past were dulled by the continued incidents of the present, and the anticipations of the future. So much had since happened, that even recent bereavements appeared remote.

But occasionally, often unexpectedly, one became aware of sad tragedies, of which those around were the survivors. Of the many such histories I learnt I will relate one.

I was strolling one morning near the armoury square, when I met an Ayah leading a little English girl dressed in deep mourning; the child was so excessively pretty that I stopped to ask her name; I afterwards learnt her story. Her father was an officer in the Gwalior contingent, a Captain Stuart I think; he and his wife were both murdered on the night of the mutiny. The child escaped by an extraordinary accident. In the confusion a lady carried her away in mistake for one of her own children. There was a brother still younger; his native nurse had concealed him on the flat roof of the house, and there he was forgotten. At morning he awoke, and began to cry. His cries attracted the Sepoys. They amused themselves by firing at the child as he ran round peeping through the balustrades, and calling for his nurse and his mamma, till a bullet ended his terror and their enjoyment.

The lady who told me the story shed tears as she related it. I met the little girl once more, never again. I

believe she was taken to England after we left the fort. Her subsequent fate I have never heard, though I have often wondered; when thinking of those times her sweet face and sad story have risen to memory.

The direct communication with Calcutta had been closed at an early period of the disturbances; what letters we received or sent travelled by a circuitous route through Bombay. Even this route was often closed. It would be more correct to say that it was only occasionally open. Days and days, even weeks, passed without our receiving any intelligence from the seat of Government. When any intelligence of importance was expected, the arrival of these long delayed mails became a matter of extreme interest.

We had for a long time been very curious to hear what the opinion of the Supreme Government would be regarding the battle of the 5th July, and the subsequent disasters. One afternoon it was reported that the long expected dispatch had arrived, and very soon after the rumour spread that the dispatch contained an order for the removal of the General. In the course of the next day it became known that the rumour was correct. The General had been relieved of his command, and Colonel Cotton, the senior officer of one of the two Sepoy regiments lately disbanded, was placed in military charge of the fort under the title of Commandant.

The General was felt by all to be unfit for his position; nevertheless, his removal called forth towards him general sympathy. He was personally both liked and respected, and it was regarded as his misfortune rather than his fault that he had been placed in a position for which old age had incapacitated him.

The sympathy towards him was increased by an impression that prevailed that the manner of his removal

had not been very gracious. The order, it was said, was harshly worded, and its harshness was not softened by the mode of its delivery. The dispatch was addressed to Mr. Colvin. Mr. Colvin was a man kind in heart, but not sympathetic, nor always very considerate in manner. He sent for the General, and received him—I am only repeating the story as I heard it—in the presence of other officers, and abruptly handed him the dispatch. The General took it with a smile, not the least anticipating its contents. He read it, turned very pale, and appeared as if about to faint; he recovered himself, and behaved with much dignity. He rose, handed back the letter to Mr. Colvin, bowed, and left the room.

Colonel Cotton's appointment was followed by many of those improvements in the order and cleanliness of the fort that I have already mentioned; and also (though the two matters were unconnected) by an investigation into the conduct of the Agra native officials. Most of these had had the good sense to leave at the same time as the police; a few, either innocent or over-confident, had remained, and were now arrested and placed on their trial. One was hung. Regarding the rest there commenced a renewal of those altercations between the authorities that previous to the battle had caused so much scandal, and been the occasion of so much disaster. Into the particulars of these disputes I will not, however, at present enter. Our attention was soon diverted from them by the more interesting subjects of seeking for hidden treasure and the exploration of subterranean passages.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SECRET PASSAGES.

THE policy that had been adopted regarding the Muttra treasure had been followed in the other districts surrounding Agra. The treasure had been left in the districts to show confidence in the Sepoys, and the Sepoys had repaid the confidence by carrying the treasure off to Delhi. As a result we had come into the fort but slenderly provided with money. There was not in the treasure chests quite sixty thousand pounds in copper and rupees; and this sum, though a sufficient fortune enough for an individual, was entirely inadequate for the requirements of the Government, even for a limited period.

There did not appear, however, any present prospect of its being augmented. No revenue to speak of was being paid in, and the credit of the Government was too bad just then to enable it to raise a loan. If money was to be got it must be obtained by other means; it was thought just possible that these other means might prove successful.

The fort of Agra had once contained half the wealth of India—gold and silver incalculable. Natives are addicted to hiding their riches. It was conjectured that in secret vaults under the ground, or in recesses of the

thick walls, some of the ancient hoards might lie concealed. It was resolved to search for them.

The search commenced in the marble hall. In front of the hall is a colonnade. It would, perhaps, be more correct to call it a verandah; it is supported by arches, which spring from square columns of massive solidity. The bases of the columns rest on the marble border of the floor. A high official was passing the hall, his eye rested on the border—he noticed that the joinings of the blocks composing it were always beneath the bases of the columns. Always, save in one place—there the ends of the block were free. What could be the reason for this exception? To our minds, intent on the buried treasures, but one explanation suggested itself. Beneath the block must be the entrance to a vault, where some of the secret hoards of the ancient sovereigns lay concealed. Masons were sent for. With infinite trouble the block was raised, and disclosed, alas! only a bed of masonry.

Observation having proved delusive, recourse was had to tradition. So soon as it was known that the Government desired it a perfect flood was poured in. Of the many suggestions one was adopted. There was a respectable native in the city, whose ancestors had held office in the palace. They had left a tradition that behind the great wall was a secret vault, and in it stores of silver, jewels, and golden rupees. The vault was reached by a passage. The entrance to the passage was somewhere below the soil of our garden, at the point of intersection of straight lines drawn from different doorways. With some trouble the doorways were ascertained, and the lines drawn. They met on one of the terraces. The marble slabs were removed, they rested on a thick bed of cement, and that again on a mass of masonry, hard

as a rock. It took days to pierce it. Each day our expectations rose. They were sadly disappointed; for, having reached the bottom, we found neither vault, passage, nor concealed entrance—only the bare earth on which the foundations rested.

Our further efforts I will not chronicle, they resulted only in ridicule for their originators.

After an interval, however, our subterranean researches were resumed; but they were now undertaken for objects more immediately practical, and were conducted in a more regular and systematic manner.

It was known that the fort was honeycombed with underground passages. It was conjectured that some of them had exits beyond the walls. Our doubts on this matter had, during the days of our imaginary siege, caused us much anxiety. It was resolved to remove for the future such cause of apprehension by a thorough exploration of the vaults and galleries. This resolution, when it became known, afforded general satisfaction. It was felt that the explorations would conduce to our safety. It was hoped they would also gratify our love of the marvellous; that the workmen might come on some of the buried treasures, in which we still wished to believe, or that they might discover some explanation of the two traditionary mysteries of the palace,—the fate of 'the four soldiers' and the meaning of 'the vault of the skeleton.'

Some years before the mutiny the officer at the fort happened to be lying awake when the sentries were relieved. Relieving guard with the old Sepoys was always a tedious business. The outgoing sentry enumerated, in a droning voice, all the different articles under his charge, and all the various directions he had received from his predecessor. The officer was falling

into a doze when his attention was aroused by the concluding order '—— and if the four English soldiers came out of the vaults you are at once to tell the sergeant.' Next morning he sent for the sergeant, and inquired who these four soldiers were, and how and when they got into the vaults. The sergeant could give him no information. He had merely repeated the direction as he had received it. The curiosity of the officer was excited. He prosecuted his inquiries, and brought to light a curious story.

On our first acquisition of Agra an English detachment was kept in the fort. One day four of the soldiers were missing. They had entered the palace, and been seen to descend the vaults. They had not come out of them. The vaults were searched, but the soldiers were not discovered, nor any clue as to what had become of them. While the search was in progress the order had been issued that had attracted the officer's attention. It had not been countermanded, and so for near half a century it continued to be repeated; passed on from one sentry to another for a generation after the occurrence that gave rise to its issue had been forgotten.

I once had an attendant, who in his youth had been a Sepoy in the Agra provincial battalion. He told me that he had been on duty in the fort at the time, and remembered the disappearance of the four soldiers. He said that some persons thought the men had deserted; others thought that they had fallen into some pit or well. But all that was known accurately was that they had entered the subterranean passages, and were never seen to emerge from them. He added that in consequence of this occurrence the remoter parts of the galleries were walled up, and great restrictions were placed on access to the remainder.

Many of the galleries, however, had been closed long previously; some, perhaps, by the Mahrattas, others generations earlier. This fact, which might have been conjectured, was made certain by the engineer in charge of the fort about sixty years ago. He was looking at the palace from the river, when it struck him that the windows in the great wall extended beyond the termination of the gallery into which some of them opened. A rough measurement convinced him of this. Either, therefore, the gallery had originally continued further, or else the remaining windows lighted another range of chambers.

The gallery terminated so abruptly that the engineer adopted the first of these explanations, and concluded that for some reason or other the further portion of the gallery had been walled up. He commenced to open it. The wall was hard and enormously thick; the work occupied days. At length a stone fell outwards; through the aperture came a ray of light; and when the opening was enlarged the workmen looked into a round, deep, vaulted chamber. Across the upper portion stretched a wooden beam, and from the beam hung suspended the remains of a human skeleton. The lower part of the vault was choked with rubbish, and over the rubbish was a pile of human bones.

The discovery made a great noise at the time, but society in India changes so rapidly that in a few years it was generally forgotten. Our present occupation of the fort had brought the story to recollection, but the exact particulars were a matter of dispute, as, indeed, was the alleged discovery of the skeleton and the bones. It was with great interest, therefore, we learned that the excavations in this place were to be resumed.

I will not go into the details, which without a plan

would, indeed, be unintelligible. It was ascertained that the engineer had been correct in his surmise that the gallery continued, but wrong in supposing that it continued in a direct line. He had cut through the original wall of the vault. The gallery had been blocked up at a point where it turned abruptly to the right. This point was ascertained, and the masonry cleared away. The gallery made another turn, and then divided. One portion led down by many stairs and through several small chambers to a low, narrow, arched doorway, loosely blocked with rough stones. A few blows forced them outwards, and displayed the Rowney, which, as I have explained, is the dry ditch that runs at the bottom of the great wall, thus proving the existence of those concealed entrances of which we had, some of us, been so apprehensive, others of us so incredulous.

The other division of the gallery led inwards in the direction of the palace of Jehangire. In many places the roof had fallen in; everywhere it was more or less choked with rubbish. The process of removing the rubbish was tedious and slow. The reports of the progress of the work formed the most interesting topic for discussion at our evening meetings. Who could tell what hidden chambers might be discovered? what hoards of gold and silver might not by some chance stroke of the pickaxe be brought to light?

Our anticipations and speculations were suddenly put an end to by the stoppage of the work and the removal of the masons and labourers to another part of the fort. Where the passage led to remained undiscovered, as did also the secret of the vaulted chamber. The stones and mortar that filled its lower portion were left uncleared, leaving also unsolved whatever mystery might lie beneath them.

The workmen were removed to the Gwalior square, and were employed in clearing the vaults below the terrace there of the fallen masonry and other rubbish that had accumulated during a century. These vaults were more spacious and more airy than those on our side. It was intended to fit them for the occupation of the women and children, should the Gwalior contingent come and besiege us. The operation of removing the fallen rubbish was not very exciting. Our attention had been diverted to other matters, when the report spread of a most interesting discovery.

The reader may remember my description of the subterranean chamber, known by the natives as the 'Crystal Hall,' by us styled the 'Grotto of Jehangire,' and also my account of the narrow, winding staircase by which it was reached. There was another and easier entrance through a broad, low archway in our square. Till quite lately this entrance had been kept closed. To most of us it was unknown. For some reason the doors had now been left open, and, attracted by curiosity, some of the residents of our square wandered in.

One of them was examining the beautiful designs that ornamented the walls. Drawing his hand over a flower in the pattern, he happened to tap it. To his surprise, the plaster sounded hollow. He tapped again, felt sure, and informed the engineer. The engineer came, tapped also, and then sent for torches and masons. The plaster was removed; behind it was discovered an empty recess; beyond that an archway closed by a rough wall of loose stones. The stones were forced out with crowbars, and there appeared a broad, straight flight of stairs, descending by an easy incline to some unknown depths. The party advanced cautiously down

it. Presently a glimmer of daylight appeared; it increased, and they entered a very large, lofty, vaulted hall. From the other side of the hall there was a continuation of the stairs. They led to various galleries, and finally to a small arched doorway, very roughly blocked with stones. The stones were so loosely piled that a push or two displaced them. The party passed through, and found themselves in the Rowney at the base of the octagon tower. The doorway was in the recess of an angle formed by one of the sides of the tower. Its situation prevented it from being easily observed, and it was further concealed by a shrub that had grown before it.

The discovery of this hall and staircase renewed our pleasant excitement regarding the explorations, and afforded us an interesting subject for our evening conversations. The ornamentation of the walls of the 'Crystal Hall' was known to be not later than the reign of Shah Jehan. The staircase must, therefore, have been built up for more than two hundred years. The object of its closure was a puzzle to which no solution was forthcoming, and which afforded, therefore, room for any amount of conjecture. In a portion of the hall were some marble fittings, which showed that it had at one time formed an appendage to the apartments of the Emperor himself, or of the chief ladies of the Zenana. But no other relics were discovered of its former occupants, neither gold nor jewels nor even fragments of furniture or ornaments.

There was something in the aspect of this closed chamber that appealed very strongly to our imagination. It was so suggestive of mystery. It so reminded us of the vicissitudes of earthly greatness, of the brevity of human life. In the palace above generations had come

and gone, dynasties had reigned and passed away; but here, through the narrow window, only the sunbeams on the floor had daily traced their course, by night the bats flitted around the walls. For two centuries no other visitor had entered, no other sounds disturbed its deep repose.

CHAPTER XXV.

GHOST STORIES.

SECRET passages suggest ghosts, and of these and evil spirits the fort was believed to be very full. Some frequented the palace, some the ramparts, while others hung on trees outside the gateways. The fairies kept to the wells, but other female spirits of a most malignant description roamed about promiscuously. Predominant over the other ghosts was that of the founder of the fort, the great Emperor Akbar. He was never seen, but he manifested his presence by sounds and influences that were even more dreaded.

An old attendant of mine had once experienced them. When quite a lad he served in the battalion that then supplied guards for the fort. One evening he was crossing the great square, when he heard his name called. Thinking it was a comrade, he made no answer. In a minute the voice came again, and from a different direction, 'Kulloo Beg! Kulloo Beg!' it said, 'tell me whose house this is.' He now felt a little uncomfortable, and hurried on. He had nearly reached the gateway, when the question was repeated and in a louder tone, and the voice came from right before him.

Kulloo Beg now thought it best to answer. He replied, 'Oh, brother! Whoever you are, why do you ask? Do you not know that we are in the fortress of

the illustrious Company?' As he uttered the word 'Company' there came a yell and a scream, and in a voice of thunder he heard it shouted, 'It is false! It is false! The house is mine! mine!! mine!!!' Kulloo Beg saw nothing, but he had a horrible impression that he was surrounded by forms of terror. The voice and this feeling so overcame him that he fell to the ground in a faint. When he recovered consciousness he crawled to the guard-house, and there related his adventure.

One of his comrades told him that he had heard the voice of Akbar, and if he heard it again he must reply, 'The house is yours, my Lord Akbar,' or worse might befall him. Kulloo Beg avoided the chance of hearing the voice by keeping in after sunset. But at length one evening he was sent out on some duty, and, to his terror, he heard his name called, and the same question addressed to him, 'Tell me whose house this is? Tell me whose house this is?' Kulloo remembered the advice he had received, and before the inquiry was repeated he answered as directed, 'Yours, my Lord Akbar. Yours, and no one else's.' He heard a sort of murmur of approval, and after this was molested no more—at least not by the Emperor, but he had experiences of other apparitions.

It was at night and in the cold season, the soldiers were in the guard-house, and the workmen were leaving the fort. One of them came in, and reported that he had seen a light on the northern bastion. It seemed as if some people were cooking there. The native sergeant ordered out a party to see, and, if true, to arrest the intruders. The party proceeded to the ramparts; Kulloo Beg was one of them. As they approached the bastion, sure enough there was the fire, and a large cauldron suspended over it. They came near, the cauldron was

full of what seemed soup, and was boiling furiously. But no one was there. The men were puzzled, and a little uneasy. They remained looking on. The contents of the cauldron bubbled and heaved, black lumps seemed rolling about in the liquid. As they looked, one of the lumps rose to the surface.

Kulloo's companions shrieked and fled; Kulloo himself stood transfixed with horror. The lump rose, lifted itself above the cauldron, and displayed a human head with great teeth and rolling eyes. The mouth opened, and addressed him. What it said Kulloo knew not. At the first sound he fainted away. When he came to himself the sun was shining, the fire and the cauldron had disappeared, and there was no sign of smoke or cinder on the pavement.

The party were considered to have escaped easily, for some of the spirits are very malignant, especially the fairies and a female ghost who assumes the form of a young woman, and is distinguishable from such only by the fact that her feet are put on the wrong way. One of these creatures nearly caused the death of the head of my office. When a young man he was sitting on the bank of the road by the outer defences. A woman passed, and as she went by turned and lifted the cotton sheet that native women wear over their heads, smiled, and beckoned to him to follow. He saw that she was young and pretty. Nothing loth, he complied. They went on till they reached the ravines, when a puff of wind raised her skirt, and, to his horror, he perceived that though she was walking in front, her feet were turned towards him. The spirit seemed aware that she was discovered, and as he noticed her feet she turned. Her aspect was changed to that of a devil. She advanced towards him with claws and long teeth, he had

no doubt, to tear him to pieces. Just then a man and a cart came in sight. This saved him. The spirit glided down a pathway, and disappeared among the ravines.

The young man's life was preserved, but he did not escape altogether unharmed. The influence of the ghost had affected him—he was ill, he nearly died.

The fairies are still more dangerous. They haunt wells, those immense reservoirs peculiar to India, which, reached by long inclines and surrounded by apartments of many storeys, more resemble pieces of ornamental water in subterranean houses than mere wells. Here by day the fairies, the 'Peris' of our Eastern stories, lie concealed. At night they repair to the court of Rajah Indra, the king of the skies, and dance before him till the dawn approaches.

In the course of the excavations, one of these immense structures was discovered in the ruins of the old palace. The fairies had not yet been seen in it, but in a still larger well at Futtehpore Secree they were known to exist, and when they could to entice children. The old guide to that palace informed me that when a little boy he nearly fell a victim to them. He and some other lads were playing on the terrace; one ran a little way down the steps, the others followed him. At the first turn they got a little frightened, for the lower stairs were dark and the water beneath looked gloomy. They were going to turn when they saw below them, growing out of the wall, a red flower. The rest were afraid to venture. My informant was bolder, he ran down the stairs and plucked it; as he returned in triumph his companions screamed and scampered up to the terrace. He looked and fainted away—the stalk of the flower was dropping blood.

Fortunately for him his father happened to be passing. Hearing the screams he ran down and brought up the child in his arms. Had he not the spirit would have

destroyed him. As it was, her influence long affected him, and was only got rid of by many charms.

Somewhere about the fort, outside I think, is or was a 'Peepul' tree; to this tree a species of demon is partial. One took up his abode in the branches; below the tree there was a guard of a single sentry. The demon appeared to the men; they complained that the spot was unsafe. Their complaints were, of course, not attended to. A night or two after a sentry was found dead, the following night another shared the same fate. For some time it was found necessary to double the guard.

I believe the story is perfectly true. I remember hearing it related as such when I first arrived in India. It was supposed that the men died from sheer terror.

During our residence in the fort neither the ghosts nor the spirits made their appearance, but sounds were heard and sights seen which caused much wonder and gave rise to much speculation. Of the many stories that circulated I will relate two, which I will repeat as I heard them, without in any way pledging myself to their veracity.

One night someone lying awake heard a tapping below the 'Jehangiree Mahal;' he heard it the next night also. It seemed to come from the Rowney, and was as if some iron tool was being struck against the wall. The man, who was a clerk, mentioned the circumstance; the story reached the ears of the authorities. A watch was placed in the vaults. Towards midnight the sounds commenced—they were those of someone digging a chisel or crowbar into the masonry. While the party were listening the footsteps were heard of the sentry approaching, the tapping ceased; when the sentry had passed on it recommenced. The next morning a strict search was made along the Rowney, but there were no marks of footprints, nor any chips, nor signs of digging on the surface of the wall.

The watch was kept up for some nights, and was followed by a search each succeeding morning. Every night the tapping was heard, but no trace discovered of the authors in the morning. The mystery was never cleared up, neither was that of the lights at the Delhi Gate.

When we first entered the fort hundreds of labourers were here employed, throwing up defences and constructing palisades. During the progress of the works a shed appeared in the Rowney. It was supposed to have been put up by some of the labourers for shelter; no attention was paid to it. But one night a clerk, who had quarters in the gateway, noticed a light in the Rowney, which appeared to proceed from the shed. He mentioned the circumstance to a sergeant, who told his officer, and a sentry was posted below at a spot where the shed would be in full view.

The night was dark, but not too dark to discern objects at a short distance. Near midnight the sentry perceived a figure creeping towards the shed; the figure seemed to enter; in a minute the light appeared. The sentry challenged, then he fired. Next morning the shed was searched. The bullet had penetrated a water jar, but of lamp or visitor there was no trace. The next night all occurred as before, except that two figures were seen to enter the shed. But again in the morning there could be found trace of neither men nor lamp. The third night three figures were observed and fired at as before. At the discharge the light vanished, but the morning search showed only that the ball had entered the shed. The shed was now removed and the ground dug into, but no trace could be discovered of a concealed passage, nor any means conjectured by which the men could have found exit from the Rowney or place of concealment within it.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OLD PALACE.

When I was young the covers of playing cards used to be ornamented with the picture of an Eastern sovereign, in turban and jewels, and which bore the legend of 'the Great Mogul.' Who the Great Mogul was I did not in those days comprehend, and perhaps some among my readers may be even now equally unaware. A few words of explanation may not therefore be out of place, for it is in the palace of that potentate that we are now residing.

The Mohammedans entered India towards the latter end of our twelfth century. In a surprisingly brief period they subjugated the entire country. These first conquerors were known as the 'Pathans,' from the name of a small Afghan tribe, of which some of their earliest bands were composed. The Pathans ruled in India for about three centuries, when they were in their turn subdued by a hardier race that had migrated from the wilds of Mongolia.

Among the many descendants of the great Timour was a young prince of the name of 'Bâbur.' Bâbur's youth and early manhood were passed in unsuccessful endeavours to carve out a kingdom for himself in Central Asia. Towards middle age the thought occurred to him to invade India. At the head of not a large army he descended from the mountains of Caubul, crossed the

Indus, and after one or two campaigns found himself master of Hindostan.

Bâbur fixed his residence at Agra. In his most amusing memoirs he describes his capture of the fort, and several of his adventures within it; how the late queen tried to poison him; how he witnessed the performance of a troop of Indian jugglers, how their skill astonished him, and much beside; but of the fortress or the palace he gives no description.

Accustomed to the valleys and hills of Caubul, the situation of the fort struck him as painfully ugly. At the head of a troop of horsemen he set out to discover some prettier site—he returned at night unsuccessful and dispirited. Not finding a better situation for a new residence, Bâbur set himself to work to improve the existing one. What his alterations were is unknown, no trace of them remaining; but they must have been extensive, for we learn from his memoirs that at one time no less than four thousand workmen were employed.

In due time Bâbur was gathered to his fathers; his body was conveyed to Caubul, and reposes amid the mountain scenery that in his lifetime he loved so well, and which after acquiring India he so constantly regretted.

Bâbur was succeeded by his son Hoomayoon, who also made Agra his chief residence. But before long a rebellion of the Pathans compelled him to quit it, and India as well. For some years he remained an exile in Persia. He eventually recovered his dominions, but did not long live to enjoy them, and during that period he fixed his capital at Delhi; his remains rest there under the magnificent mausoleum of red stone, erected to his memory by his son Akbar, who after him ascended the throne of India.

At the period of his accession Akbar was not much more than twelve years of age. He reigned for more than half a century. Brave, enlightened, humane, he occupies the foremost place among the sovereigns of his race. Making allowance for his age and his surroundings, he is, perhaps, one of the greatest rulers that history records.

Akbar enlarged and reconstructed the fort; the present walls and gateways are of his erection, as also, I believe, are those massive ranges of buildings now used as magazines. Of his palace only a few crumbling walls now remain. Akbar, though he rebuilt the fort, did not much reside in it; he spent most of his time in campaigns and in progresses through his vast dominions. His chief permanent residence was at Futtehpore Secree, a village some two-and-twenty miles to the west of Agra. There he erected a palace, the chief buildings of which are still in nearly perfect preservation. There may be seen his bed-chamber, a small apartment standing alone, hardly larger than a closet, the terrace of black and white marble on which he played chess, the pieces being the girls of the Zenana, in dresses of white and green; and the hall with passages in the walls, constructed for the princesses and their companions to amuse themselves in with the game of 'hide and seek.'

The memory of Akbar is revered by the natives, especially by the Hindoos; many traditions are still current regarding him, but none that I know of are connected with the fort.

Akbar was succeeded by his son Jehangire, whose birth was supposed to be miraculous. Akbar for a long time was childless; to obtain offspring he implored the prayers of the saint Gholam Chistee; one evening the saint summoned the Emperor, and addressing him said,

'My prayers at length are heard, but to my own cost —my son is ill. This night he will appear to die, but his soul will pass into the body of the infant that your queen, the Lady of Jodpore, is about to bear you.'

From his spiritual father Jehangire is said to have derived certain supernatural powers. The king of Persia, so the story goes, heard the rumour and sent an ambassador to ascertain its correctness. The ambassador found the Emperor playing unharmed with two fierce tigers. He wrote to his master, 'It is not a man, but a god who rules in India.' Other ambassadors perceived in the Emperor qualities less divine. Sir Thomas Roe, who was sent by our James I., describes him as a capricious, dissolute despot, in the main easy going and good-tempered, but occasionally frightfully cruel. He narrates in detail one drunken orgie, at which he himself was present, a silently reproving witness. The narrative of his embassy, composed by the chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Terry, contains an interesting picture both of the Court and of the condition of the country at the period.

Jehangire is chiefly remembered from his attachment to the daughter of an Afghan chief, the celebrated Noor Jehan ('Light of the World'). The story of their loves has often been told—I will not repeat it. Noor Jehan was a lady of talent, as well as beautiful; she exercised over the Emperor an influence rarely attained by women in the East. Concealed by a curtain she sat behind him —so tradition says—each day, as he held audience; she directed his policy, and to give evidence of her power she once induced the Emperor to have her name impressed on the coinage.

It was in the reign of Jehangire that tobacco was introduced into India; and Noor Jehan is accredited with the invention of the hookah, that most elegant of all

the many instruments devised by man's taste and ingenuity for the consuming of it. She is also said to have discovered that richest of perfumes, 'attar of roses.'

Jehangire continued to occupy Agra as his capital, but he did not always reside there. Like his father, he made progresses. He several times visited Cashmere; and he passed much of his time at Ajmere, in Rajpootana. It was there that he received Sir Thomas Roe. In his latter years he lived chiefly at Lahore, and there he died.

Jehangire added to the buildings of the fort—to what extent I do not know; of his erections, the square adjoining our own alone remains. Constructed of deep red stone, massive and gloomy, it does not much attract the attention of visitors, yet, architecturally, it is very interesting; nothing can exceed the beauty and variety of the geometrical designs with which the walls and ceilings are adorned. They will not for very long continue to be so, for the stone is soft, and after the exposure of three centuries is rapidly crumbling away. The feathering of the great archway is, for lightness and elegance, unequalled in India—I may say in the world.

Jehangire was but little trammelled by the precepts of his religion. He even publicly showed his indifference to them by coining money in direct violation of the injunctions of the Koran, impressed with the signs of the Zodiac. These coins, which were prohibited by his successor, are now very rare. I never succeeded in obtaining more than three.

It is stated in the histories that Jehangire had a cluster of golden bells, suspended in his chamber, which any applicant for justice could cause to sound from the gate. I suspect the story is a myth; I never could find any tradition of the place where the bells were hung, nor

any explanation of the means by which at so great a distance they could be made to ring.

During the reign of Jehangire many Europeans visited India, and quite a colony of them was established at Agra. About fifty years ago several of their tombs were accidentally discovered. The inscriptions showed that the colony contained both Dutch and English. With rare exceptions these visitors from the West were either traders, artificers, soldiers of fortune, or missionaries of the Church of Rome. Some few, but very few, were travellers; among them the once well-known Thomas Coryat, the introducer into England of our table-fork.

Coryat published an account of his travels, as also did several of the missionaries and some of the traders who lived to return to Europe. Impressed by the fact that India was ruled by a class few in number, and alien in religion and race from the mass of the population, they designated the Emperor by the name of his tribe, and usually spoke of him as the 'Mogul.' In compliment to his magnificence, and to distinguish him from his subjects, the epithet of 'great' came to be prefixed. By this combined title of 'Great Mogul,' the sovereigns of India were known throughout Europe for the next century and a half. The accounts of their wealth and splendour permeated the literature of the age; even in a greater degree the folk-lore and nursery tales. To our forefathers the 'Great Mogul' was what to their ancestors had been 'Prester John,' a potentate half mythical, but whose name was associated with all that imagination could picture of power, riches, and grandeur.

Such pictures were almost realised in the Court of Jehangire's son and successor, the Emperor Shah Jehan. Of all the monarchs recorded in history in his personal surroundings, he was the most magnificent. Of his

wealth and his taste he has left enduring monuments in his buildings; for beauty and solidity on the face of this earth they have no compare.

During the earlier portion of his reign Shah Jehan resided chiefly at Agra. He pulled down a good deal of the then palace, and erected in its place those squares and marble edifices that I have described, as also the mausoleum to the memory of his favourite queen, which, under its abbreviated designation of the 'Taj,' is known throughout the world. The proper appellation of the building I may mention is 'Tâj beebee kè rouzah,' that is, 'The Tomb of the Crown Lady.' The name of this favourite queen was 'Mumtâz Máhal' ('the ornament of the Zenana'). In the Emperor's attachment there was not, that I am aware of, any romance, nor of its object, that I ever heard, are there any traditions. The celebrity of the lady is derived solely from her tomb.

After residing in the fort for some years Shah Jehan declared the summer heats of Agra to be insupportable, and removed his capital to Delhi, that to the sensations of Englishmen is but little, if any, cooler. At Delhi Shah Jehan erected a palace, which among the royal residences of the East is considered to have had no equal.

In his declining years the Emperor illustrated the mutability of human affairs and the instability of the power of Oriental despots. Seized with illness, he was unable to present himself at the daily public audiences; the report spread that he was dying, and at once his four sons rose in rebellion and prepared to contend for the about-to-be-vacant throne. Shah Jehan partially recovered; he made friends with his eldest son, and, ill as he was, hurried on with their united armies to Agra, against which his younger son, Aurungzebe, was advancing. Then followed, on a larger scale, scenes much

resembling those which had preceded and followed our battle in July.

Against the advice and entreaties of the aged Emperor the prince insisted on marching out to meet his brother before the rear portion of his own army had arrived. He went out, as had our general—full of overconfidence; like him he encountered disaster. The armies, I imagine, were mere mobs, and we may judge of their spirit and discipline by the event that decided the victory. The prince was mounted on an elephant; tired of his position, for a few minutes he dismounted. The report spread that he was slain; seeing his elephant riderless, his troops believed it, and precipitately broke and fled.

With the remains of his army the prince returned to Agra—Aurungzebe followed; neither the Emperor nor his son had the spirit to make resistance. The fort surrendered, and Aurungzebe entered in triumph, placed a garrison at the gates, and then returned to pass the night in his camp, which was pitched without the city. Aurungzebe left the garrison under command of his nephew. In this Shah Jehan saw an opportunity: he sent for the young commander, and endeavoured by promises and entreaties to induce him to betray his trust. According to the story of the day he offered him even the succession to the empire; but he offered it in vain. In the morning Aurungzebe returned, and hope was over. One can picture the scene—the tears, the agitation of the aged monarch, the persuasions of his courtiers, perhaps, the half hesitation of the young prince. I often speculated in what chamber of the palace it occurred.

Aurungzebe did not reward the fidelity of his nephew; cold and suspicious, he never again put confidence in one whose loyalty had been exposed to such temptation. He

now formally deposed his father, placed him under secure restraint, and having defeated his other brothers, himself ascended the throne, assuming the title of Alumgire (conqueror of the world), a full account of which, and also of Aurungzebe's subsequent illness and journey to Cashmere, may be found in Bernier's charming narrative.

Shah Jehan survived his deposition for some years, and though kept a close prisoner was otherwise kindly treated. He was supplied in abundance with attendants, and allowed to maintain all the state of royalty. He passed his time in witnessing wild beast fights, and the performances of jugglers and dancing girls, and holding a shadowy court. When these amusements wearied, it is said that he employed himself in teaching children. When his son the Emperor heard of this last fancy, the story goes that he smiled and observed, 'Ah! the taste for empire is in my father still.'

One can picture the aged monarch, white robed, white bearded, as his portraits represent him, seated in the evenings on that marble throne, gazing sadly on the flowing river, or wearily pacing the courts and terraces that he had formerly trod as absolute ruler of near a seventh of the human race. His remains rest beneath the dome of the Taj, by the side of those of his favourite queen.

On hearing of his father's death, Alumgire hastened to Agra to perform his funeral obsequies. He was met at the entrance of the Zenana by his sister, the Princess Roshunara. She held in her hands a golden bowl, filled with the most precious of the crown jewels which Shah Jehan had retained. The present mollified the Emperor, and he took the Princess again into favour. She had previously incurred his displeasure from her having, in

the family contentions, adopted the side of her father and her elder brother.

Alumgire did not remain long at Agra, nor did he, that I know of, again visit it, save for a brief period before setting out for his disastrous expedition to the Deccan. The remainder of his long reign was there passed in the vain attempt to crush the rising power of the Mahrattas. Agra had already ceased to be the capital of the empire; after the death of Shah Jehan it ceased also to be a royal residence. The fort and palace were, however, maintained, and a small garrison also, I believe, under command of one of the nobles of the Court.

Alumgire died in the Deccan at the commencement of the last century; and the empire, on his decease, began to exhibit all the signs of approaching decay. The succeeding emperors resided at Delhi, and though the extent of their actual dominions was much reduced, they nominally still ruled over the entire continent of India, nor was the splendour of their Court and personal surroundings in any way diminished. But these were not much longer to continue. In 1745 Nadir Shah, the King of Persia, at the head of some thousands of Moguls, burst into the Punjaub. He broke to pieces the vast undisciplined host with which the then Emperor Mohammed Shah advanced to meet him. He took prisoner the Emperor himself, and entered Delhi with him in triumph. Provoked by a treacherous attack on his soldiers he ordered a massacre of the inhabitants, which continued till the Emperor stood before him, a suppliant with folded hands.

The invasion of Nadir Shah was little more than a plundering expedition, and, as such, was perhaps the most successful ever undertaken. After remaining a few

weeks in Delhi, Nadir Shah set out on his return to Persia, carrying with him the peacock throne, the golden ceiling of the hall of audience, and other treasures in gold, silver, and jewels, whose value was variously estimated at from twenty to thirty millions of our money. Among the jewels carried off was the Koh-i-Noor, which in process of time, having again found its way back to India, came into the possession of the East India Company on our conquest of the Punjaub, and by them was presented to Her Majesty.

Mohammed Shah did not long survive his defeat and humiliation. He died about four years after the departure of Nadir Shah. On his death the Mogul Empire fell quietly to pieces. The authority of the Emperor was nominally acknowledged, and the coinage continued to be struck in his name. But each rajah, each governor of a province assumed practical independence. The titular Emperor was often an exile; when not, a captive or a pensioner. In the scramble that ensued for the fragments of the empire Agra fell into the hands of Sooruj Mull, the Rajah of the Jâts of Bhurtpore. Sooruj Mull entered the fort, and for a few days possibly occupied the palace. But he had no intention of there residing. He placed a small stone bull on the roof of the great hall of audience, where it still remains, and he took away some of the marble slabs to adorn the new palace he was erecting in his own territories at Deeg. Having done this he returned to Bhurtpore, leaving a garrison in the fort.

The garrison did not remain long. Agra was wrested from the Jâts by a stronger power. Scindia, the Rajah of Gwalior, very shortly took possession, not only of Agra, but of the greater part of the Upper Doab. The Mahratta armies were frequently officered and commanded

by Europeans; General Perron, a Frenchman, was their commander-in-chief, and under him General Hessing, a Dutchman, was for many years Governor of the province of Agra and Commandant of the fort. He resided in the palace, in the apartments, so I was told by his grandson, now occupied by Mr. Colvin. In the vaults below he hid away his accumulations, which are supposed to have amounted to many lacs of rupees. The rest of the palace was left to the owls and the bats, and the older portions began to fall slowly to decay. The city, for the most part, had already become a heap of ruins.

The natives have a proverb that three things bring together a population: a river, the rain, and the monarch ('Dirreou, Bâdul, Badshah'). Agra exemplified the truth of the saying. It was the presence of the Court that had brought the inhabitants, and when the Court left they followed it. About the year 1784 Warren Hastings, then Governor-General of Bengal, sent an embassy to the titular Emperor, Shah Alum, who was then a prisoner, under guise of a guest, in the Mahratta camp, near Muttra.

The embassy started from Bombay, and passed through Agra on their way. The appearance of the city struck them with a melancholy wonder. They rode through miles of streets, passed palaces, caravanserais, market-places, mosques, and grand gateways, but saw never an inhabitant. The ordinary houses had fallen to pieces, the finer buildings were in every stage of decay.

The Mahrattas held possession of Agra, and their garrisons occupied the fort, and its commandants the palace, for nearly half a century, and then their time arrived. General Perron, driven by Lord Lake out of the Doab, retreated on Agra, and took refuge in the fort. Lord Lake followed with his English army, and planted

his batteries near the river bank. The summons to surrender being disregarded the batteries opened fire. The first shot struck one of the buildings in our enclosure, the second went crashing through the marble screen. Before the third shot was fired the garrison capitulated. General Perron was allowed to march out with the honours of war, and also to take with him his personal property, which amounted, I think, to about a hundred lacs of rupees, a sum equivalent to a million of our money.

The fort and the palace now came into our possession, and suffered the fate that has generally befallen the native buildings of which, by treaty or conquest, we have become the masters. A regard for the monuments of the past is not one of our characteristics. Such of the buildings as could be utilised were so. They were turned into magazines, store-houses, barracks, and residences for officers and overseers. The rest were suffered to decay. A good many, when they had become ruinous or were found in the way, were destroyed. The more beautiful portions of the palace were, however, a little cared for; they were not injured by being used as store-rooms, and they were maintained in tolerable preservation.

Before the mutiny the palace was a place to dream in, vast and silent, bathed in a sleepy sunshine; it seemed filled with the memories of the past. But, as in most Oriental palaces, these memories were general, only a few parts of it being associated with any particular incident. Of these few, one is the narrow flight of stairs that leads from the Hall of Ambassadors to our enclosure. In descending these stairs a daughter of one of the emperors was nearly burnt to death. The flame of a lamp caught her dress, and she refused to call for assistance, lest her cries should bring some of the young nobles

in the hall to her rescue; death, in her estimation, being preferable to the dishonour of having her unveiled features exposed to the gaze of a man.

When the native physicians proved unable to cure her injuries the Emperor summoned, I think, an English surgeon from one of our newly-established settlements in Bengal. Under his care she recovered. With a self-denying patriotism the surgeon selected a charter for his company as his reward; but, writing from memory, of these last particulars I am not certain.

It was at the great archway to our square that Roshunara is said to have presented her brother Alumgire with the golden bowl and its more precious contents; and the baths to the left may have been the scene of an act of horrible cruelty, perpetrated by Shah Jehan.

Shah Jehan had four daughters—Roshunara, Jehanara, and two others, whose names also terminated in 'ara.' One of them had a lover. He had been admitted to the Zenana; the Emperor was heard approaching; unable to escape, the young man took refuge in the flues of the baths. Either knowing or suspecting the place of his concealment, Shah Jehan directed the fires to be lighted, and his daughter to perform her ablutions. The princess was forced to obey, although knowing that the fires which heated the chamber were consuming her lover.

The incident is recorded by the historians, but not the place of its occurrence. It may have happened elsewhere; let us hope that it did, for it would be a pity that structures so exquisite should be associated with cruelty so revolting.

These baths are opposite the marble hall; externally they do not differ from the other apartments of the range, and on that account were little known. For some reason

they were kept locked, and seldom exhibited to strangers. When the door was passed chambers were seen that might have been those of the Genii. The walls, floors, and ceilings were of white marble, and they glowed with flowered mosaics, executed in cornelians, agates, and lapis lazuli.

The marble hall was where the highest in rank of the queens held her court, and was, therefore, I presume, at one time occupied by 'Mumtâz Mâhal.' Dimly lighted, gorgeous in colour, it realises our conception of the chamber of an Eastern princess. The walls are not inlaid, but painted. Time has given to the polished marble something of the mellow tint of ivory. With this the rich colours of the paintings beautifully contrast. The designs are flowers and scrolls, and both design and execution are so incomparably superior to that of other Indian buildings as to suggest the idea that they are the work of the Italian and Portuguese artists, whom it is known that Shah Jehan employed.

The hall is so perfect that it requires but little imagination to picture it as it must have been when the palace was inhabited—to see the curtains hung, the rich carpets spread, and the princess laden with jewels, and surrounded by her attendant slaves, reclining on her pillow of gold brocade.

The palace of Jehangire has no special traditions connected with it. It was erected for the Emperor's chief wife, 'the Lady of Jodpore;' for Jehangire, like his father Akbar, had married a princess of that territory. To please the tastes of its occupant, the architecture in some parts resembles that of the Hindoos. Especially so does that of the long gallery in the upper storey. This gallery, like the hall at Futtehpore Secree, was constructed for the ladies of the Zenana to play at 'hide and

seek' in. The walls are full of deep recesses that served as places of concealment. The old guide was fond of describing the method of the game. The eyes of one of the players were bandaged, and a doggerel verse recited:

'Gulab ke pane Kurruah tale,
Billi —— wahi phulale,
Ahi Bhaghò Raja ke chore chute gya.'

Which may be thus rendered:—

'Attar of roses, and mustard oil,
The cats a-crying, the pots a-boil,
Look out, and fly, the Rajah's thief will catch you,'

As the last words were uttered, the blinded girl was released, and the walls echoed with the sounds of flying feet and merry laughter.

The lady Noor Jehan resided long at Agra, and there erected a mausoleum to her father. She had intended to construct it of silver, but was persuaded to substitute marble. But I do not know if she occupied any portion of this square of the palace. There are no traditions of her having done so.

A word as to the material of the palace. The stone is a rather coarse red sandstone. The marble is of kind not found in Europe. I have been told that it is not marble but a species of alabaster; whether this statement is correct I cannot say. It differs from the white marble of Italy in the size of its crystals, which are very large. This peculiarity detracts from its beauty when used for slabs or tables, for the reflections from the separate crystals give to the surface a dusty and discoloured appearance. But this texture especially adapts it for the purposes of architecture. The walls composed of it have a rich and glistening whiteness, exhibited by no other material.

This marble is very translucent. The slabs composing the screen of our enclosure were about four inches in thickness, as near as I could guess. Yet when the sun shone bright I could distinctly see through the slab the shadow of my hand, and the outline of every finger was distinct.

In the days of its glory, the palace was the scene of many crimes, of much that in human nature is base and degrading. But the stream of time has swept these impurities away. There remains only a creation of the beautiful; the expression of a spirit of splendour and magnificence for ever passed away.

I fear that if we could recall the past and behold the inmates of these marble courts, we should hardly consider them as equal to their surroundings. Sir Thomas Roe describes the faces that peeped at him through the latticed windows without enthusiasm, noticing only that they were 'but indifferently white.' And a native, who had seen the Zenana of the late king of Delhi, informed me that with but few exceptions the ladies were small, dark, and plain.

CHAPTER XXVII.

QUARRELS.

FROM these dreams of the past we were presently aroused by the disputes of the present. The quarrels had recommenced, and with renewed animosity. To say that the quarrels had recommenced is hardly correct, for that implies that they had previously ceased, which they never had. It was merely that a fresh subject was selected, and just now it was the defences.

The fort having been erected before the days of artillery was deficient in many of the modern requirements—among others, it had no glacis. On one side the town, on another side the ruins, came close up to the walls, while the ravines would afford shelter for any amount of assailants. Colonel Fraser had of late been very busy in remedying this defect, so far as it was capable of remedy. He had blown up the ruins, and sloped off the ravines, and he now proposed to demolish the houses. It was on this the dissensions arose.

The part of the city that adjoined the fort was a low suburb, chiefly consisting of mud hovels. Such as they were, however, the owners valued them, and objected to their removal, and their objections were supported by some of the higher civil officials. Others of the authorities supported Colonel Fraser's proposals. Everyone else took one side or the other, and the question,

which was really one of military engineering, was debated with all the animosity of a party dispute. After much discussion an arrangement was come to. The houses were to be levelled, and the owners were to receive compensation; but as there was no money to pay it, it was to be given in the form of promissory notes, redeemable with interest on the restoration of order.

The arrangement in itself was a very just one, yet under the circumstances it failed to give satisfaction to either party. The suburb was inhabited by just the class that had been the most active in destroying the station. The English and Christians, who had not been reimbursed for their losses, felt indignant that more consideration should be shown to these people, the authors of the disturbances, than to themselves, the victims. The owners of the houses, on the other hand, regarded the promissory notes, and with some reason, as little better than waste-paper. They did not believe that the Government would ever be in a position to redeem them, nor could they afford to wait for that period should it arrive. Their poverty obliged them to sell their notes for whatever they could get for them, which just then was next to nothing. Practically, the whole compensation found its way into the hands of the grasping money lenders.

This difficulty had hardly been disposed of when a fresh cause of dissension presented itself. In the midst of the suburb, close against the wall of the fort, stood an old mosque, very ugly, but large, massive, and covering a great extent of ground. The Mohammedans of the city came forward in a body, and petitioned that the mosque might be allowed to remain. The chief civil officials still retained their partiality for the Mohammedans, and, notwithstanding all that occurred, their belief in their

loyalty. The rest of the English and Christians were much exasperated against them. A fresh contention arose, in which, except among the engineers, the military question was rather lost sight of. One party would have been glad to see the mosque destroyed because it was a mosque; the other party for that reason desired to preserve it.

The engineers were firm, and they so clearly had common sense on their side that the civil authorities in the end felt obliged to yield. That they might do so gracefully, they proposed to procure a 'futwah,' or judgment from the Cazee, which would, they represented, be a justification for the demolition in the eyes of the other Mohammedans. The military authorities, so the gossip went, gave them to understand that, if it gratified them to procure the 'futwah,' they of course could do so. But all the same, 'futwah' or no 'futwah,' the mosque should come down.

The reply was not encouraging—nevertheless the 'futwah' was procured. I did not see it, but I heard the contents; and as my informant was the Cazee himself, I imagine I heard them correctly. The 'futwah' sanctioned the demolition on the strength of a precedent of the Emperor Alumgire, that pious monarch, when at war with the Mahrattas, having pulled down a mosque that sheltered them from the fire of his artillery—the doctors of the law having declared that the Almighty would pardon the removal of His temple for so worthy an object as the destruction of His enemies.

The precedent was hardly in point, as it was the preservation, not the destruction, of the unbelievers for which the removal of the building was now desired. However, in the satisfaction of obtaining the 'futwah,' this defect was prudently overlooked.

Beyond the civil authorities the 'futwah' did not

give much satisfaction. The Mohammedans refused to accept it as of any validity, declaring openly that it had been extorted, an opinion that the Cazee himself rather encouraged; while the English considered the procuring it as both an undignified as well as an unwise proceeding—for it was practically conceding to our enemies the right to define the limits of our means of defence against them.

The demolition of the mosque was regarded as a defeat for those of the higher officials who had desired its preservation, and, as these were not at the time popular, their defeat gave satisfaction. They, however, had a consolation. The military favourite was Jotee Pershand, the Commissariat contractor, and he had lately erected a very fine new house in the suburb, and this, of course, would come down with the rest; and thus, though Jotee Pershand had escaped arrest, he would suffer injury. In this expectation they were doomed to disappointment. The preliminary difficulties having been arranged, an army of workmen were let loose in the suburb. For some days they were concealed in a cloud of dust, out of which occasionally came the sound of explosions. When the dust cleared away, the mosque had gone, the suburb had gone, but to the indignation of the civil authorities the house of Jotee Pershand appeared as before—bright with fresh paint, white and triumphant.

To the remonstrances made to them the military, so the story went, returned a very curt answer, to the effect that if the enemy approached the house would be destroyed, and that in the meanwhile it could remain as a reward to its owner for his good services; and with this unsatisfactory explanation the civil authorities had to rest content.

These disputes regarding the defences were succeeded

by disputes on other matters, and those again by others in a series it would be tedious to enumerate. There were disputes about the militia, disputes about the rifle corps, disputes about the Motee Musjid, disputes about the marble hall, disputes about the Sunday services held within it—disputes, in short, about every conceivable subject. The civil authorities disputed with the military, the militia with the regulars, and all among themselves; and, as if this were not enough, some of the civil officials made a very unprovoked attack on the Roman Catholic bishop and clergy. As Christians of all denominations were then in danger of common destruction from the Mohammedans, the time selected for this was generally regarded as inopportune. Some of the quarrels were at the time excessively amusing, but they would hardly now, after so long a period, much interest the reader. Suffice it to say that, having seen Agra, I could understand Jerusalem. We did not indeed stab or poison, but there were the same jealousies, the same animosities that in a ruder age, and amongst a less civilised and more impulsive people, would have led to such results.

It was often said that a real danger would have united us. I do not think so, for we never could have been in more peril than for the first few days we imagined ourselves, and it was just then that the discord was at the greatest. Also throughout it was in matters that concerned our safety that the disagreements were the most constant and the most virulent; this was especially the case in regard to that most important business, the procuring intelligence.

This duty had lately been made over to a committee; the members of it were men of ability and of official experience. So far as the duties of their department could be reduced to routine they were perfectly performed; beyond

it they failed. The committee did not understand the art of extracting the grain of truth from the mass of exaggeration with which native informants surround it, and, what was almost worse, the committee themselves had strong prejudices.

Natives are exceedingly quick at discovering what information will be agreeable—very unscrupulous and very adroit in modifying their news accordingly. The Government intelligence always confirmed what were known to be the Government views.

But this intelligence was often afterwards discovered to be incorrect, and it was very seldom early. It soon began to be discredited; before long to be a subject of open ridicule. To this result many circumstances contributed. Among others the following :—

The office of the Intelligence Department was at the end of the upper storey of one of the sides of our square. The room was reached by a balcony, and being at the end of it visitors to it were exposed to the observation of the occupants of the other apartments, as well as to that of all the loungers in the garden.

It soon began to be noticed that an elderly blind man was in constant attendance. Early each morning he was seen painfully making his way along the narrow balcony, guided by an attendant. Inside the room, or seated before the door, he remained patiently till the evening. If in the meanwhile he descended it was only for his meals, or to confer with some natives in the garden.

The singularity of this proceeding attracted attention, and suggested inquiry. It was ascertained that the blind man was the principal purveyor of the committee's intelligence. He was perfectly honest, and very respectable. His loss of sight did not affect his hearing; there was no

reason, therefore, why he should not collect news as well as another. Nevertheless, the fact of his being employed for the purpose created much amusement, was made the subject of many jokes and caricatures, and, though very unjustly, added to the low estimation in which the intelligence of the committee was already regarded.

The Government intelligence being so defective, several officials endeavoured to supplement it. The most successful was Captain Nixon. He had a natural aptitude for the work, and he had also at his disposal the Bhurtpore establishment of trained messengers, who in a native court are usually very efficient. Captain Nixon's information was generally both the earliest and the most correct. Being so, it would have been wise in the authorities to have availed themselves of it. They endeavoured instead to prevent his receiving it. It was contemplated, indeed, at one time to procure his removal, but difficulties appearing in the way of assigning sufficient reasons the idea was abandoned.

The efforts of the other officials were not more favourably regarded; the Government accepted no information save what was submitted by the Department; and the Department received none that was not supplied by their own employés, the blind man in particular. A time came when early and accurate intelligence was essential to our safety; and then, as I shall relate, this course of procedure nearly produced a terrible catastrophe.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EXPEDITION.

THE filth of the fort in the early days of our occupation had made us dread an outbreak of pestilence. A few cases of cholera had increased these apprehensions, but they died away when it was found that the disease did not spread. The excellent sanitary arrangements that were afterwards made prevented the occurrence of other epidemics, so far, that is, as order and cleanliness could prevent them.

Nevertheless it was sad to notice how the graveyard filled. A spot for a cemetery had been selected on the summit of the ravines before the Ummer Sing gateway. Commanded by the cannon of the batteries, the dead could be there interred even should the enemy approach. The space enclosed had seemed at first unnecessarily large. Before long it appeared as if its boundaries would have to be extended. Some who had been in the battle died of their wounds; more sank from the effects of exposure; and of the children, many succumbed to the combined effect of the confinement, the want of comforts, and the terrible heat.

Our little girl was seized with fever—she was long ill, but she recovered; our baby sank. Other deaths followed, adults as well as infants, and presently the dreaded cholera again made its appearance, and this time among

the soldiers. For the cholera a hundred remedies have been devised, but when it attacks soldiers only one has been found efficacious, and that is to march out the regiment. It was partly the desire to do this that suggested the expedition to Allyghur.

Allyghur, as the reader may remember, is a station on the road to Meerut, about forty miles distant from Agra. By occupying it, it was thought that communication with Meerut might be re-established. Also it was desired to disperse a body of villagers, and Mohammedan fanatics who had collected in the neighbourhood; and it was expected that other advantages would follow.

It was characteristic of the state of things in the fort that a measure so purely military should have been originated and carried out almost entirely by civilians; equally so, that it should have been made the occasion of angry controversy, quarrels, and disputations. The blind man, it was said, suggested the scheme; the Board of Revenue made all the arrangements. There was a difficulty for some time in obtaining Mr. Colvin's consent. He was ill and despondent, he dreaded a possible disaster; but at length he gave his approval. The preparations were hurried on, and before he withdrew his sanction the expedition started.

It consisted of about a hundred and fifty English soldiers, two guns, the mounted militia, and as many volunteers as liked to join. There was also the medical staff and the Commissariat; and, small as the force was, it took with it, besides two priests and a missionary.

The expedition left the fort about five o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening there came on one of the most terrible storms of wind and rain, thunder and lightning I ever remember. For two days we received no news; on the third, a rumour spread that the force had

fallen into an ambuscade and been cut to pieces. The report reached Mr. Colvin, and threw him for some hours into a state of extreme agitation. It was said that he bitterly reproached those who had suggested the expedition, and deplored having himself consented to it. Towards evening his regrets and our fears were allayed by the arrival of a messenger from the camp. It was announced that we had gained a glorious victory; but so little confidence had come to be placed in the official intelligence, that the announcement was generally regarded as an attempt to gloss over a defeat.

The next morning private letters arrived, and the truth became known; we had not sustained a defeat, but neither had we achieved any very decided victory. What had really taken place I will now describe. My information was derived from various officers and volunteers who were present in the engagement.

Our troops found the insurgents posted in a garden, which was enclosed by a bank and ditch. Our troops advanced and sent in a shot or two from the guns; on this the insurgents came out and charged. Our men drove them back with considerable loss. Our force was not strong enough to storm the garden, nor to advance and leave the insurgents in our rear, nor was it thought quite safe to encamp in front of them on the open; so we retired a few miles, and the enemy, as mobs usually do, in a day or two broke up and dispersed to their homes. Our force then continued its march to Allyghur; but, if I remember rightly, did not think it prudent to proceed farther than the town of Hattras, which is ten miles on the Agra side of Allyghur.

The insurgents who charged out of the garden were chiefly Ghâzees, or Mohammedan fanatics. They attacked our men with great desperation; but, nevertheless,

inflicted on them hardly any loss. The reason was this, they were armed with swords, and instead of striking at once they waved their weapons and uttered war cries, and as a consequence were shot or bayoneted before they delivered a blow.

When the Ghâzees charged, an old mollah, or priest, sat by the bank chanting the Koran to encourage the warriors; as the combat thickened, his voice rose louder; at length he worked himself into an ecstasy of fanaticism. He closed the volume, seized a sword, and exclaiming, 'I too will be a "shaheed" (religious martyr), he rushed on our soldiers, one of whom ran him through with his bayonet.

When the force entered Hattras they were received by the Hindoo shopkeepers with great demonstrations of loyalty—demonstrations that the Government were sanguine enough to believe in, and more sanguine still to accept as an expression of the general sentiment of the country. They were soon undeceived; the population showed themselves so hostile that the expedition thought it prudent to fall back some ten miles nearer the fort. It was afterwards ordered to approach still nearer, as in due course I shall relate. On our retiring the Mohammedan fanatics collected again, entered the town, and paid off the Hindoos within it for the welcome they had given us: a good many were killed, the rest ill-treated and plundered.

The expedition did not end in the disaster some of us had predicted, and which Mr. Colvin had dreaded. But neither did it produce the great results that its promoters had anticipated; it did not quiet the country, nor impress the natives, nor open the communications. It did no more than collect a little revenue that might have been obtained with less trouble nearer home; but

it benefited the health of the men, and it wonderfully raised the spirits of us all by showing that the fears that had hitherto kept us such close prisoners were a good deal imaginary.

We now extended our rides and drives. The houses adjacent to the fort were repaired and occupied, and the militia moved out to a large building near the great parade ground. This building I shall have occasion again to allude to; it was a sort of assembly room, and known as the 'Metcalfe Testimonial,' having been erected in honour of that distinguished Indian statesman, Lord Metcalfe. These changes had the effect of much enlivening the view from our window. Instead of contemplating a silent lake, we looked on boats, and on carts and passengers continually crossing and re-crossing the bridge. The boats, I should explain, were chiefly moored near the bank, and some of them were occupied by English families, for the sake of change and coolness.

An occasional incident, however, made us aware that there were still elements of danger around us. Several Englishmen riding alone, or too far from the fort, were at different times attacked by armed natives, always, happily, without fatal or even serious results. I chiefly remember these attacks from the dissensions within the fort which they gave rise to; dissensions on the one side regarding the reality of some of the attacks, on the other side regarding the measures that ought to be adopted to prevent their recurrence. At the time these disputes excited the highest interest, and all, from the authorities downwards, took part in them; an account of them now would be painfully wearisome.

Parties of armed natives were certainly then better avoided; but it was a mistake to regard all such as enemies. It was a mistake that the younger Englishmen

were apt to fall into; their doing so on one occasion gave rise to an amusing incident, which might, however, have ended tragically.

The police stations in the adjacent country were being re-occupied; but to one no native official could be found bold enough to venture. It was some distance away, and the villagers around were very turbulent. At length, by persuasion and increased pay, or some such inducement, a man was got to undertake the duties. He started late in the afternoon very jauntily, on a pony, himself well armed, and accompanied by attendants also carrying weapons. That evening I drove out with the gentleman who held the post of deputy, or, as it was then termed, joint magistrate, of Agra.

We happened to take the road by which this new chief policeman had proceeded. Two miles or so from the fort we came on a small crowd, some young Englishmen on horseback, some armed natives and ponies. The Englishmen were angry and excited, the natives appeared anxious and a little frightened. Both sides were talking, but neither understood the other's language. On seeing us one of the Englishmen rode up to beg our assistance. They had come, he said, on a rebel party, and proposed to hang the leader. My friend alighted, and in the rebel leader discovered his new chief policeman; it was, however, with the greatest difficulty that he convinced the young Englishmen of their mistake.

We had all now in the fort become in much better spirits; our improved spirits benefited our health, the cholera ceased. The news from Delhi was also encouraging; we learnt that our batteries had been advanced nearer to the walls; we expected, though rather prematurely, to hear almost immediately the announcement of the capture of the city.

In this cheerfulness, in these anticipations, there was one person, and that the chief among us, who did not share. Mr. Colvin had entered the fort fully persuaded that he should never leave it; each day increased his depression, any improvements in our prospects he regarded only as a prelude to fresh disasters. It seemed, in a few days, as if his forebodings would be realised. Delhi did not fall, but, on the contrary, there came news from Lahore that there was a possibility that the Punjab might follow the example of these provinces, and rise also in rebellion. If the Punjab rose our position would be all but desperate; for the rising of the Punjab would almost certainly be followed by an advance of the Gwalior contingent. We should be besieged then in reality, and we might not be able to hold out till assistance arrived from England. The outlook was again gloomy—it made us all anxious; it plunged Mr. Colvin into a still deeper depression. His depression was increased by other incidents that presently occurred.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. COLVIN'S DEATH.

We had received no letters for some time, for the communications had again been interrupted, when one evening the news spread that a messenger had arrived with a mail from Bombay, and that it contained despatches from Calcutta.

The Governor-Generals in those days interfered but little in the affairs of the Upper Provinces. Lord Canning had been two years in India, yet hardly anything was known among us regarding him. The mutiny, however, had altered his position; much would now depend on his personal character and the policy he might adopt. On both these points there was great curiosity. To learn something on the subject I strolled over to my brother—I found him looking worn and anxious. My brother was by nature reticent, on official matters—he was so also on principle. We sat some time in silence. Then, as if he had been vexed beyond endurance, he told me that Mr. Colvin had received despatches that had quite upset him. I remarked that I supposed they were some unfavourable criticisms on his policy before the battle. 'Not at all,' my brother replied, 'or I should not have mentioned them—only a reprimand for the delay in sending in last year's administration report, and an elaborate form, to be filled up and returned,

regarding the unanswered letters for the last six months.'

My brother went on to tell me that had Mr. Colvin been in his usual health, the despatch would not have done more than temporarily annoy him. As it was, it had thrown him into a state of extreme agitation. He insisted that the report should be prepared at once. With much trouble my brother convinced him that this was impossible. The records were burnt, the information that they had contained could not now be procured.

Persuaded of this, Mr. Colvin commenced to dictate an explanation; he possessed, ordinarily, a remarkable facility for official composition, but the faculty had now deserted him. After a few sentences he became confused, hesitated, then broke down altogether. There followed a sad scene, the sense of injustice, the knowledge of his own powers, the consciousness of his inability now to use them. At length he became calm, and permitted my brother to draft for him a short letter, stating the impossibility of submitting the report or of filling up the form.

Having begun to talk, my brother continued; it seemed a relief to him to disburden his mind of some of its anxieties. He spoke of the extreme peril of our situation, of the great danger we ran of being besieged. 'And if we are,' he said, 'it will be God's mercy if we do not share the fate of Cawnpore; and what manner of men must they be in Calcutta,' he added, 'who, at a time like this, when they ought to be straining every nerve to save the Empire, are thinking only of unanswered letters?' I do not pretend to give my brother's exact words, only their purport, as after these long years I recall them.

From this time Mr. Colvin's health began to fail rapidly. This was not caused by the despatch, it was a mere accident its arriving as the crisis of his malady was approaching. The despatch had vexed him sadly, but the vexation was not repeated. The communications were again interrupted; from Calcutta, at least, no more annoyances proceeded. Mr. Colvin had no particular illness, none at least that the doctors could recognise, but he felt weak, he felt weary. Soon he took to his bed; he did not again leave it. He was very patient, very resigned, weary of this world, and willing to quit it. He bade farewell to his son, gave his last instructions, and awaited calmly the end that he felt approaching.

As occasionally happens in such illnesses the end, though from the first inevitable, was long delayed, longer than he had expected, longer than his physicians thought possible. He lingered so long that some of those about him began to entertain hopes of his recovery, hopes that he himself did not share.

Mr. Colvin was much respected; the news of his illness caused universal sorrow. The sorrow was sincere, nevertheless it had the effect of making us very sociable. We gathered in knots to hear the latest reports; we assembled in the evenings to discuss them. There were more tea parties at that period than at any other during our confinement in the fort. For some days there were contradictory rumours; it was given out that Mr. Colvin was worse, then that he was better, then that he continued the same, till one afternoon it became known that hope was over, and that he was dying.

There was a large party of us assembled that evening on the terrace before the marble hall. Mr. Colvin's apartments adjoined, the sounds of our voices could not

reach them; but the knowledge of what was there passing impressed us with a feeling of reverence. We spoke low, and of little but his illness. The party broke up early; one by one the other lights went out, the square became dark and silent, save that through the doorway of Mr. Colvin's enclosure figures came and went, and from over the marble screen appeared the glow of a lamp, and we heard the sounds of that hushed activity which prevails near the chamber of death.

I remained late, as did another gentleman. He was a contemporary of Mr. Colvin; long ago he had been his companion. His thoughts flew back to the time when they had been lads together; he spoke of Mr. Colvin's great abilities, his desire to win a high position, and how step by step he had attained it. In sad commentary to this came the light of the lamp from the room where he then lay dying.

The next morning Mr. Colvin was still alive—a report even spread that he was better. I spent the day at the Taj, where, in one of the side buildings, I held my office. About four in the afternoon as I was returning I happened to raise my eyes; I was struck by the immense number of birds that were hovering over the fort—thousands of crows, and whole flights of kites and vultures. Filthy and revolting as is the appearance of these creatures when seen close and on the ground, nothing can exceed the grace and beauty of their movements in mid-air. They were sweeping round and round in great curves, and ascending and descending in long spirals. The sight was so beautiful that, notwithstanding the glare, I kept my eyes fixed for some time on the skies to observe it.

There was then a belief among many of the English that these carrion birds possessed some instinct that

warned them of an approaching death, and that guided by it they collected above a habitation from whence a soul was about to take its flight. As I watched the birds the recollection of this superstition occurred to me; I wondered if there was any truth in it, and if this present assemblage denoted Mr. Colvin's end.

As I entered the gate I met an acquaintance, who told me that Mr. Colvin was still alive, and that it was given out he was better. We dined at five; when the meal was over I called one of my servants, and desired him to go over and inquire how Mr. Colvin was. The man dropped his eyes, and replied quietly that it was unnecessary, he had just heard 'is dunniah fânê sā rehlat keah' (that his spirit had commenced its march from this transitory world).

In India decay so soon follows death, that the soul has hardly taken its flight before it becomes necessary to prepare for the interment of the body. Mr. Colvin died about five in the afternoon, a little after seven o'clock I passed his rooms on my way to my brother. The repose of death was already broken, servants and officers were hurrying in and out, furniture was being moved, and carpenters were at work preparing the coffin. The noise and bustle were in painful contrast to the stillness, the hushed footsteps of the night before.

After tea I repaired as usual to the terrace of the marble hall; there was a larger party assembled even than on the previous evening. The sad event of the afternoon was the topic of conversation. All were unfeignedly sorry, but the future so overpowers the past that much less was said of him who was gone than of the events which his death might give rise to, especially as to who would succeed him in the government.

Mr. Colvin was buried in the armoury square, at a spot

he himself had selected. The funeral took place the next morning about an hour after sunrise. The ceremony was very impressive—nearly the whole fort attended; and there was among the crowd a reality of sorrow not always called forth on such occasions. Mr. Colvin's illness and troubles had created for him much sympathy; the mistakes he had made were forgotten, his goodness of heart and his many other excellent qualities alone remembered. Also in the death of our ruler we seemed to see for ourselves a presage of misfortune.

The morning was in harmony with the occasion—the sky was overcast, and a thick mist covered the fort. As the coffin was lowered into the grave a small cloud appeared above the Bengalee bastion. It was followed by the roar of a cannon, the commencement of the funeral salute. The guns were discharged at intervals of a minute, the firing lasted a long time. As the last puff of smoke disappeared in the fog, Mr. Colvin's memory seemed similarly to fade away into the shadows of the past. Ere the noon had gone he had become a mere recollection.

Mr. Colvin will, for his connection with the mutiny, occupy a place in our Indian history; and in that respect, I fear, not a favourable one. Yet of the many governors I have known he was in many respects incomparably the best. He was a man of great ability, and he had the rare excellence of always preferring right before expediency. In all schemes for general improvement he never overlooked the rights of individuals. He regarded the promises of the Government as sacred, and would on no plea allow them to be explained away or set aside. In these respects his policy was in marked contrast to that of his immediate predecessor, and to not a few of those who have succeeded him.

It was Mr. Colvin's misfortune to be called upon to meet a crisis, which to meet successfully was impossible, and which to meet at all required qualities that he did not possess.

In the course of the morning it was notified that Mr. Reade, as senior civilian, had assumed charge of the government.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FALL OF DELHI.

Mr. Colvin died under every circumstance of gloom and depression. He was hardly laid in his grave when our prospects began to mend. We first heard from Delhi that our batteries had been advanced nearer to the city. Next we learnt that a breach had been made in the walls. Soon after a messenger arrived with the glad tidings that the Cashmere gate had been taken. As this gate was the key to the city, its capture was considered as equivalent to the fall of Delhi. Of that event, however, for three days no news came; on the contrary, there were alarming rumours that our troops, having entered the gate, had been driven out again. We were becoming very anxious, when on the morning of the fourth day a second messenger reached us, bearing a letter dated from the Palace of Delhi, and reporting the actual capture of the city.

It was on Sunday morning when the news arrived; in a few minutes it had spread through the fort. Everyone thronged out to hear the particulars. There followed a general joy and exultation—a universal congratulation. With the fall of Delhi the neck of the mutiny was felt to be broken. Its final suppression was now merely a question of time. Our delight was in proportion to the danger from which we were relieved.

In honour of the event it was determined to fire a salute. There was a difference of opinion among the authorities as to the number of guns it should consist of. Some thought that a royal salute of twenty-one guns would be sufficient, while others considered that an extraordinary salute of one hundred and one guns could alone properly proclaim our sense of the importance of our victory.

The decision was eventually in favour of the larger number of guns, and was come to for rather an old reason. The walls of the fort were very old, and they had not been originally constructed to support artillery. Some of the engineers had always expressed fears that if the cannon were fired the walls would come down. The present was thought a good opportunity for testing their solidity all round.

The salute was fired the next day at noon; everyone turned out to see—it was quite a gala. The troops were paraded, the band played, the flags fluttered. Every available space was crowded with spectators. The sky was bright, the air was fresh—for it was the end of September. The river sparkled in the sunshine, the country beyond was green with the rising crops.

We stood with a large party in the balcony of the octagon tower. The scene, the occasion put us all into the highest spirits. We chatted, we congratulated each other, as we waited for the firing to commence. Presently came a boom from the Bengalee bastion, another followed and another, and ever so many more. Some of the reports were loud, others we could hardly hear. We remained with our eyes fixed on a tower just beyond us; projecting from the embrasures peeped the muzzles of the cannon. Above the battlements we could see the artillerymen—they stood motionless as statues. One had

in his hand a long stick, at the end of which was the port-fire, the others held short poles with round heads, very like mops.

The firing had gone round the outer walls, it now approached our side of the fort. It came nearer—suddenly the statues seemed to start to life—they leaped backward. The artilleryman that held the stick raised it, lowered it. A little puff of smoke appeared above the battlements, from the muzzle of the cannon there darted a jet of flame, driving before it a ball of smoke that looked as solid as a cannon shot. There resounded a crash like thunder, and from out of the embrasure flew such a shower of stone chips and fragments of mortar as showed the apprehensions of the engineers were not altogether devoid of foundation. In another instant the ball of smoke had expanded to a cloud, and gunners, cannon, and the tower itself were concealed from our view.

The scene was one to be remembered—the bright sky, the grand building, and the crowds of spectators. In the sound of the cannon, too, there was something exciting. As they roared forth we felt as full of ardour as if an enemy had been below us, and in place of merely celebrating a victory, we had ourselves been achieving one.

To complete the salute, the firing should have gone again round the fort. But for some reason, not made public, it was now discontinued, leaving the question of the stability of the walls still undecided.

The firing over, we dispersed, but far too much excited to settle to any occupation for the rest of the day.

Our rejoicing in the fort had nearly occasioned a tragedy in the city: a gun that commanded the principal street had by some accident been loaded with grape shot, as well as with powder. The mistake was discovered

only just in time to prevent the artilleryman from discharging the cannon.

The salute was fired, partly to do honour to our victory, partly to announce the fact of it to the natives. So far as the latter object was concerned, we might as well have spared our powder. The people of the city did not believe that we had really taken Delhi; that is, they did not believe the story till some days later, when they were informed of it by their own correspondents. The villagers remained incredulous for several weeks, and their incredulity was shared even by some of the rural potentates.

The Rajah of Dholpore resided about thirty miles off, on the banks of the river Chumbal. He was sitting on his terrace with his court and ministers, when there came the sound of cannon from the direction of Agra. The sound made the Rajah a little anxious—he dispatched a messenger to learn what it meant. The messenger hasted, and returned with the information that the English in the fort had been firing guns in honour of the fall of Delhi. The Rajah laughed, and said that that sort of device would not impose on him.

In the more distant parts of India it was months before the fall of Delhi was accepted as an accomplished fact.

In the meanwhile, we in the fort were very cheerful, very exultant. To our cheerfulness other causes besides our successes contributed. The cold weather had set in, and with its arrival the plague of flies had departed. These horrible pests left as suddenly as they had appeared. One week we noticed that they were fewer, the next week they were gone.

The capture of Delhi was not completed till several days after our troops had entered it. Our troops had

first of all to secure their position in the Cashmere gate, where the breach had been effected. This done, they worked their way, street by street, through that portion of the city that bordered the river, till they reached the palace. The palace they entered without opposition, for the King and his attendants had abandoned it. Preparations were being made to attack the rest of the city, when it was discovered to be empty. The whole population—men, women, citizens, and soldiers—had left it. The King and his family were found concealed in the mausoleum of one of his ancestors, the Emperor Hoomayoon. The women and the children and most of the men had dispersed among the neighbouring villages, but what had become of the rebel army remained a mystery.

It was a mystery that occasioned us a good deal of anxiety, for the army might be coming to us, which would be bad, or they might cross the river and surprise our small detachment, which would be worse. This detachment, as the reader may remember, had been sent over the river to occupy the town of Hattras. From thence it had been recalled, and was now encamped at a spot some twenty miles distant, just on the line of road the enemy might traverse. If they came on it unawares our little force could hardly escape annihilation.

In the midst of our fears and conjectures I received an express from Muttra. It had been sent off in hot haste by the police at the north of the district. It was to inform me that the whole rebel army were not very far distant, and were marching down in our direction. The writer estimated their numbers at about two hundred thousand, and it was composed, he said, of the revolted Sepoy regiments, of the mutineer cavalry and artillery, an immense body of Mohammedan fanatics, and men of all sorts who had left Delhi.

I communicated my information at once to the Government. I learnt that they had already received a similar report from Captain Nixon, whose intelligence was invariably the earliest and most accurate. Neither my report, however, nor his were accepted as reliable. The Government were persuaded that the rebel army, instead of approaching Agra, were making their way to Rohilcund, and were then just about crossing the Ganges.

The Government had come to this belief, so it was said, on the strength of the representations of the blind man, on which, though they so often proved erroneous, confidence still continued to be placed.

Three days passed, and the truth of my information was put beyond question. The mutineers entered the Muttra district—the police fled, the country rose. From every quarter messengers came pouring in with the news. The authorities were now convinced, and with conviction came panic. The measures of precaution that ought to have been adopted quietly days before were now taken in hurry and confusion. An express was sent off to bring in the detachment, the militia were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to return to the fort at a moment's notice, and the families who were living in the houses outside were recommended to come again within the protection of the walls. On a smaller scale was repeated the disorder and confusion that preceded the catastrophe of July 5.

Since that time we had really never been in such immediate danger. One immense army of rebels was advancing towards us from Delhi, and a smaller one was approaching from the opposite direction. This last was a rebel force known as the 'Indore Mutineers,' from its consisting chiefly of Sepoy regiments who before the mutiny had been stationed near that city. After mutiny-

ing, they had sauntered leisurely up the country and settled down thirty miles off at the town of Dholpore. There they had since remained, and we had become so used to their presence that it had ceased to cause us any anxiety. Now, just at this time of all others, news came in that they had struck their tents and were in full march to Agra. For three days we could get no accurate intelligence of their movements. Then it was ascertained that they had arrived within fifteen miles of the fort gates and were encamped on the further side of a small stream, known by the name of Khara Nuddeé.

This information was followed by a panic. The militia were ordered into the fort, and after them came hurrying all the English and Christians who were living outside it. We were spending the day at the Taj. I got a message from one of my people that I had better return, as there was a report that the rebels were approaching. On receiving the message I ordered the carriage. There was a little delay in getting it. It was nearly sunset when we approached the gateway. There we found the greatest confusion; for nearly a quarter of a mile the road was completely blocked by a mass of men, carts, and animals. The crowd was so dense that it was hopeless to attempt to get through it in the carriage. We alighted, and even then, surrounded by our servants, it was with the greatest difficulty that we managed to force our way to the drawbridge. There the confusion and struggling baffled description. The crowd, which was nearly entirely composed of natives, were half frantic with terror and excitement. Each time the gates swung open they surged in, in such a mass as several times actually carried away the sentry with them. I saw him more than once lifted completely off the ground, and forced back some yards before he could extricate himself.

The crowd seemed to think that the mutineers were close behind them. It was, perhaps, fortunate that they were not, for in the confusion it was quite possible that by a sudden assault they might have forced an entrance. An attack on the fort, however, appeared to be about the last thing they intended. Having pitched their tents, they appeared in no hurry to strike them. Instead of coming on to fight they remained where they were to enjoy themselves. Their stay on the banks of the Khara Nuddeé promised to be as protracted as had been their halt at the Chumbal.

The rebel army from Delhi conducted itself in a similar manner. They came down by several tremendous marches, and approached Muttra much sooner than any of us had thought possible, much sooner than the Government would believe. The Seths quitted the city; the police did the same. The inhabitants, left to themselves, went out in a body to meet the army. They carried an offering of flowers and sweetmeats, and were preceded by a troop of Brahmins singing hymns. On reaching the mutineers they welcomed them as their deliverers, and conducted them into the city with every demonstration of delight.

The rebel army arrived very tired; in its own estimation very triumphant. They encamped on the great parade ground, and gave themselves up to amusement. They gave out that they had left Delhi because they had destroyed all the English there but a handful not worth waiting for, and they said that as soon as they were a little rested they should go and perform the same good offices for us at Agra; and these assertions were generally credited, and, what was most surprising, even by those who uttered them. The boastfulness of the old Sepoy was something sublime.

For some days they swaggered about, ate and drank. Then they began to quarrel. Some of their regiments were loaded with plunder, while others had hardly any. Between the two there was no good feeling. A dispute presently arose, what about I never learnt. They nearly fought, thought better of it, and separated. Half the force remained where they were, the rest removed to another parade ground. Meanwhile the mob of fanatics and refugees began to melt away. The next I heard was that they had put the bridge of boats together, and were about to cross the river. At the same time we received news from Delhi that a pursuing column under Colonel Greathed had started, and was coming down through the Doab.

Perhaps this information reached the rebels also, for they discontinued their preparations for crossing, and renewed their disputes with each other. The regiments who had no plunder proposed to obtain some by sacking the Seths' house. The manager had anticipated some such intention, and provided against it. He had made friends with the other regiments chiefly, so I was told, by heavy bribes to their commanders. These now marched their troops down to the city, put their guns in position, and threatened to open fire on their comrades if they attempted to enter. A battle seemed imminent; somehow it was averted. The regiments came to terms. The Seths' friends remained where they were; the others marched away north to Brindrabun. Some thought to worship, others to plunder the temples. They did neither. They had no sooner reached it than they returned, and set to work to finish the bridge.

I received an express to inform me that in all probability the rebel army would cross the river the next morn-

ing, at latest the day after. If they did they might surprise our detachment. I went at once in person to inform the Government that a messenger might be sent off to warn the commander. I might have spared myself the trouble. The Intelligence Department, relying, I believe, on news received from the blind man, had reported that the rebels had all gone back again to the north, and this information was accepted in preference to mine. It was partly correct, only it was not recent. The march of half the army to Brindrabun had been mistaken for a return of the whole to Delhi.

The next morning the rebel force broke up. Several of the regiments and most of what remained of the fanatics crossed the river and made for Rohilcund. The rest went off in the opposite direction towards Rajpootana. Fortunately, though quite by accident, our detachment had been recalled another march nearer Agra. But for this it might have been surprised by the mutineers, who crossed the river. As nearly as could be estimated these were about twenty thousand strong, and had a good deal of artillery. Encamped as it was on the open plain, if our detachment had been surprised by such overwhelming numbers it could scarcely have escaped annihilation. Certainly it must have suffered severe losses.

The fate of these Delhi rebels was never ascertained. Like the rest of the mutineer forces, they melted away. Some, perhaps, returned to their homes, others wandered elsewhere; but as armies they appeared no more.

I will now go back for a few days in my narrative, and mention an occurrence within the fort which at the time had occasioned us great excitement. When Mr. Reade assumed temporary control of affairs everyone supposed that he had virtually succeeded to the

Lieutenant-Governorship, for he was a man of great ability and experience, and in all other respects thoroughly fitted for the position. We all anticipated that the answer to the despatch announcing Mr. Colvin's death would bring the news of his appointment. The arrival of this answer was long delayed, for the movements of the Indore mutineers had interrupted the communications. When it came the contents were not what we had expected. Mr. Reade was not made Lieutenant-Governor. That office was for the time put in abeyance, and Colonel Fraser placed in supreme authority under the title of Chief Commissioner.

Colonel Fraser had taken a leading part in the disputes that had occurred at the commencement of the disturbances. His elevation to power, while it gratified those who had held similar opinions, occasioned not a little anxiety to those who had made themselves prominent on the other side, especially to such of them as were expecting promotion. It was also generally supposed that Colonel Fraser would inaugurate a new policy.

Neither these fears nor these anticipations were realised. Colonel Fraser was of too noble a nature to remember former differences, and he was indisposed on many accounts to make alterations, chiefly because he felt that he no longer possessed the energy to carry them out. He was advanced in life, and already stricken with the first approaches of the malady to which before many months had passed he succumbed. He took his advancement very quietly, assuming none of the state of his new position, not even changing his quarters. Each morning, attended by a single servant, he repaired to Mr. Colvin's apartments; there he transacted the Government business, what little there was, returning

home in the afternoon in the same unostentatious manner.

The abolition of the Lieutenant-Governorship excited at the time a good deal of surprise. The reasons for it were afterwards thus explained. Mr. Reade's claims were such that he could not with any decency have been then superseded; but by temporarily doing away with the office and subsequently reviving it, Lord Canning's secretaries might be able to secure it for one of themselves. And as this was exactly what afterwards did take place, there was possibly in this gossip some fragment of truth.

The departure of the rebels from Muttra enabled us to concentrate our attention on those at the Khara Nuddeé. They were only fifteen miles away, and to their own countrymen very accessible. Anyone who pleased could enter their camp, and take what notes he desired of their proceedings. There ought not, therefore, to have been much difficulty in our obtaining correct information regarding them. Nevertheless, to us both their movements and their designs were involved in great obscurity. We knew neither what they were doing nor what they intended, nor, after a short interval, exactly where they were. And on all these points there arose among us many angry disputations.

The Intelligence Department were convinced that the rebels intended to march off to the Deccan, and Colonel Fraser was so far satisfied of the correctness of this information that he suffered the militia, who had some days before been ordered back to the Metcalfe, to remain there. But then a rumour spread that the rebels, so far from intending to go to the Deccan, had made up their minds to come to the fort, and had actually crossed over the Khara Nuddeé for that pur-

pose. It was soon certain that they had crossed, though when or in what force or exactly how far were all uncertain. According to one information, most of the army and all the guns were still on the other side, and those that had come over had not advanced beyond the bank of the river. But other intelligence stated that the entire rebel army and their artillery had not only crossed the stream, but had advanced some miles in our direction.

The rebel army numbered about two thousand infantry—they had several guns, and it was believed also a considerable number of cavalry; but as to the amount of this part of their force nothing accurate was known. The presence of such an enemy so very near us was not agreeable, nor altogether safe. It would have occasioned much apprehension but for our expectation of the immediate arrival of Colonel Greathed and his column.

Colonel Greathed's column consisted of a large force of Sikhs and English. It had been despatched from Delhi to clear the Doab of rebel bands, and to go on and join the army then collecting at Cawnpore for the relief of Lucknow. The column was now approaching the point, about forty miles from Agra, where the road to Agra branched off from the main road which led through Cawnpore to Allahabad and Calcutta. It had been arranged that Colonel Greathed was here to make a detour, that he was to come to us, dispose of these Indore mutineers, and then return to the main road and continue his progress. What was our consternation to learn just at this crisis that this arrangement was altered, and that the column would proceed direct to Cawnpore.

Our situation was now really serious, and, as usual at Agra when danger was imminent, the authorities, instead of uniting in precautions to meet it, began to quarrel

among themselves. Colonel Fraser, indeed, ordered in our detachment of English soldiers that was still on the other side of the Jumna, and he dispatched an express to Colonel Greathed explaining our situation and begging him to come to our assistance. So far as Colonel Fraser had the power, I believe he also ordered him to do so, but beyond this nothing was done. The militia were allowed to remain out at the Metcalfe, and were not even provided with the proper means of defending the position should the rebel army attack it.

As to the whereabouts of that army nothing certain was known, and no sensible means were adopted to ascertain. The Intelligence Department maintained that the rebels were recrossing the Khara Nuddeé, and going off to the Deccan. But then the Department relied entirely on the information supplied by their own agents, and there was reason to fear that their agents, either from ignorance or design, were deceiving them. Many natives, very reliable, had expressed their belief that the rebel force was still on our side the Khara Nuddeé, and much nearer to us than the authorities had any idea of.

These statements were communicated to the Government, but met with no attention, nor was more regard paid to the representations of the officer commanding the militia. This officer bore the highest character for good sense, courage, and knowledge of his profession. He had expressed his opinion that the enemy were near, and that his position was unsafe, and he had supported this opinion by facts that ought to have aroused attention: among others, that strange cavalry had been seen very near the parade ground, and that some of his men when patrolling the Gwalior road, which led to the Khara Nuddeé, had been chased in by them.

Colonel Cotton was brave to rashness, he thoroughly

despised the rebel enemy—despised them to that degree that he thought it unnecessary to adopt any precautions against them. He was also not on very friendly terms with the Commandant of the militia. For one or both of these reasons he paid no attention to his reports or representations.

Things were in this condition when, to the general relief, a dispatch was received from Colonel Greathed to inform us that he was coming, and soon after an officer arrived from his camp and announced that the column would enter Agra the following morning. It was feared, however, that the column had arrived too late to be of any advantage. For the news was at the same time given out by the Government that the rebels had really recrossed the Khara Nuddeé and were making off to the south as fast as they could travel.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BATTLE OF AGRA.

THE column was to enter Agra about eight o'clock, and to encamp on the great parade ground. Long before that hour all the English were assembled at the Ummer Sing gate to see the troops march by, and the same object had brought out half the population of the city. Along the road and on the ravines there was assembled one of the largest crowds I ever beheld. As far as the eye could reach there was a sea of caps and turbans.

There is always a delay in crossing a river. The hour had long passed, and we were beginning to fear the entrance of the column had been postponed, when we noticed a movement among the crowd, and that they were turning their heads towards the city. Looking ourselves in that direction we perceived the long necks and swinging loads of a file of camels just appearing round the furthest bastion. Before them marched a band of soldiers, tall dark men with long beards, and wearing such enormous turbans as nearly concealed their faces. The beards and turbans gave them a very wild and fierce appearance, an appearance quite in harmony with what little we could see of their countenances.

These soldiers we learnt were the famous Sikhs. We regarded them with much curiosity, as also did the native crowd, and apparently with some apprehension as well,

for wonderful tales had been told of their ferocity and habits of plundering.

It would be tedious to describe the march past in detail. There were more Sikhs, whole regiments of them; also Sikh cavalry, who were wilder-looking men than even the infantry. They wore loose flowing robes, and turbans still more enormous. There was a regiment of English foot soldiers, and a regiment of English Lancers, and very much artillery. The spectacle was imposing from the impression it gave of strength and power, but it had nothing of the show and glitter of a review. The Lancers wore uniforms of plain blue cloth, and the rest, both Sikhs and English, were dressed in drab-coloured cotton. The poles of the lances were of plain ash, and had neither varnish, pennons, nor other decoration. In short, it was the reality of war—not its dress rehearsal. The troops were interspersed with strings of laden camels, and succeeded by a procession of those animals that seemed interminable. We got tired of watching it, and returned to our rooms to breakfast. From our window we could see the road beyond the river for at least two miles, and as far as we could see there was still one continuous line of camels and camp followers.

The troops encamped on the great parade ground. To enable the reader to understand the events that followed, of this parade ground it is necessary for me to give a short description. It was a bare oval plain, perfectly level; on two sides it was bordered by deserted huts of the old Sepoy regiments, and the gardens of some English houses. On the other two sides were open fields. The fields had been sown with a coarse grain much used by the poorer natives, termed Bâjrâ. The crop was nearly ripe, and the stalks formed a continuous green wall, some seven feet high. The gardens of the English

houses were full of trees and tall rank grass, as also was the ground where stood the Sepoy huts. What with the Bájrá crop, the grass and the trees, the parade ground was enclosed in a ring of vegetation, through which it was impossible to see, not easy to penetrate.

A broad straight road ran from the fort to the parade ground, which was distant from the Ummer Sing gateway a little over a mile. And among the fields on the other side of the parade stood a village, and in it a large domed tomb, known as the 'Tomb of the Wrestler.' The village and the lower part of the tomb were at this time hidden by the tall crop, but the dome formed a conspicuous feature in the landscape. Colonel Greathed was received at the bridge by some of the chief officials. His first inquiry was as to the enemy, from whom he had come to relieve us. He was informed that they had recrossed the river, and were by that time miles beyond it, flying as fast as they could towards the south. Relying on this information he allowed his force to encamp without throwing out pickets or adopting the other usual precautions against a surprise, and he himself came into the fort to breakfast.

It was about eleven o'clock, and I was busy writing, when I heard a noise as if some heavy weight had fallen. Such noises were not uncommon, as the works on the defences were still going on. I gave it no attention, but it was repeated. I stopped writing to listen, the servants were whispering outside; one of them entered, and with a frightened air said he feared something was wrong, for there was a sound of cannon, and our square seemed in confusion.

I ran out, and found everyone hurrying towards the gateway, while from the direction of the parade ground there came the sound of artillery. It was said that the

column had been suddenly attacked, and was in the thick of an engagement. I ran back, got my sword and revolver, and followed the rest to the gateway, but on reaching it we found the gates closed and all egress forbidden. Being thus prevented from joining in the engagement we made our way to the top of the gateway, in the hope of beholding it, where presently half the fort joined us.

My ideas of a battle having been derived from pictures, I was much disappointed at what I beheld. From over the furthest line of trees there were little puffs of blue smoke; each puff as it appeared was followed by the booming sound of a cannon, and all the while we could hear a faint rattle like that of musketry. As we were looking, we suddenly heard from behind a tremendous shouting, and turning our heads we saw our own regiment of English soldiers, the one that had fought at Shahgunge and been with us since. It was issuing from the gateway of the armoury square, the men were marching four abreast, hurrahing with all their might. They wore their bright new uniforms, and their bayonets gleamed in the sunlight. The fifes were playing, the drums beating; the walls re-echoed with the tramp of the footsteps as they fell to the time of the music.

It was a most inspiriting sight, enough to fill the most pacific with the ardour of combat. There seemed, however, but little prospect of the regiment sharing in the one now going on. The sounds of the cannon were becoming fainter, the puffs of smoke were fewer, and rose so far away as to be hardly visible. We regarded this as an indication that the enemy, whoever they might be, were in rapid retreat. In a short time they appeared to have fled beyond our sight or hearing. We saw no smoke,

nor, though we listened attentively, could we catch the sound of any cannonading.

We were thinking of descending, when from beyond the horizon there shot up a tall column of the blackest smoke. It was followed in a few seconds by a boom far louder and deeper than that of artillery. Some officers who were present concluded that a tumbrel full of powder had blown up. We hoped that, if so, it was one of the enemy's. After this we heard no more; we waited for a little, and then left the gateway.

In the departure of our regiment we had seen some of the joyous excitement of war; on our way down we beheld a little of the reverse of the medal. The wounded were being brought up the incline—they were carried in dhoolies, some passed close by us. In the first was an English soldier—he was alive, but terribly wounded; his shirt and trousers were soaked in blood, his face was deadly pale, he lay quiet and motionless as a corpse. Those that followed were in the same condition, some had their limbs swathed in rough bandages. None by sound or movement gave sign of consciousness.

With the wounded had come in stragglers from the field; we stopped to hear their news, and chiefly to learn who were the enemy, on which point there had been all sorts of conjectures. The information we received was all but hopelessly confused. We made out only that there had been a surprise, very nearly a defeat; but in the end our troops had driven back their assailants, who were now in full retreat, the column pursuing them. To our astonishment we learnt that the enemy was no other than that army of the Indore mutineers whom our Intelligence Department had reported as being leagues and leagues away, on their road to the Deccan. It now appeared that, instead of marching towards the Deccan,

they had been for the last three days bivouacked within a mile and a half of the fort, concealed in the gardens and among the high crops that enclosed the parade ground.

While we were talking who should come up but the blind man, led by his attendant; he informed us that he was on his way to the Intelligence Office with some most important information. Supposing that it was the latest news from the battle, we begged him to tell us. Always polite he stopped, and said that he had just learnt on reliable authority that the Indore mutineers had not really left for the Deccan, but were still this side the Khara Nuddeé, and might very possibly approach the fort.

The shout of laughter that greeted this announcement did not in the least discompose its deliverer. Nor could we persuade him that the engagement now going on rendered the communication of his intelligence no longer necessary. Guided by his attendant the old man passed on to the palace square, fully impressed that he was the bearer of most important information.

As he disappeared through the archway, with one accord we gave utterance to the same sentiment. We said that it was no wonder that the Government intelligence was so bad, when it was from such sources that they relied for attaining it.

During the rest of the afternoon the wounded were being continually brought in. From those that accompanied them we learnt fuller and clearer particulars of the battle; it was not, however, for some days that I was able to weave the various and often conflicting stories into a consistent narrative. This narrative I will presently relate to the reader.

About four o'clock in the afternoon I was sent for by

Colonel Fraser. I had sixty horsemen at the Taj; he wished me to escort with them some stores to the camp, as no troops could be spared for the purpose. It took some time to get the men from the Taj. The delay was fortunate. I accidentally heard that the gunners on the batteries had orders to fire on any native cavalry they might see approaching. I ran in haste to the Bengalee bastion which commanded the Taj road. I had not reached it ten minutes when my men appeared in sight; very pretty they looked, for they were beautifully mounted, and wore gay dresses of white, with red sashes and turbans—dresses, I may remark, which they soon learnt the wisdom of exchanging for the less conspicuous uniform of khâkee—that is, dust colour.

As they did not in the least resemble in appearance any of the mutineers' cavalry, I asked the artilleryman if he should have fired at them had I not arrived, and if so, what he thought would have been the result. The artilleryman was an old soldier, very civil and very taciturn. By way of answer he walked up to the cannon, patted it affectionately, and told me how many grape shot were inside it. Then he pointed to my men who were cantering below, and gave me to understand that if I had not brought him the written order to let them pass they would be lying on the road 'a heap of pieces.'

When I reached the camp its appearance surprised me. It was just as quiet and orderly as if nothing unusual had happened. The only indication of the battle was a row of captured guns; with one exception they had, previous to the mutiny, formed part of our own field artillery. The one exception was a piece of ordnance very remarkable: it towered above the other guns like an elephant among cattle. The mutineers had found it in

the fort of some rajah. Struck by its enormous size they had brought it on with them, though their military training ought to have told them that it was a mere incumbrance. It required, I think, about twelve yoke of oxen to draw it, and for field service it was next to useless.

On my way back I noticed a Sikh horseman lying dead at the entrance of one of the bazaars. He had been shot by some of the cowardly scoundrels there residing.

It was after dark before I got home. My late return saved me from an unpleasant duty; in my absence all the civilians, not otherwise employed, had been carried off to man the ramparts.

At daybreak the next morning I set out with a friend to visit the battle-field; but before I describe it, it will be best to give an account of the battle itself. My account, derived from others, may contain inaccuracies; but, if so, there are many eye-witnesses still alive to correct them.

The column, as I have said, after crossing the river had marched on to the great parade ground. There the soldiers pitched their tents, and went to breakfast. Relying on the official information they had received that the mutineers were far away, the commanding officers neither threw out pickets nor adopted any other of the usual precautions against surprise. Especially, no search was made among the high crops or in the gardens; also the crowds from the city were allowed to flock round the camp—as many as liked to.

Among these crowds there was a troop of jugglers; they came on throwing balls and doing tricks, and advancing always nearer and nearer towards the tents. Some English Lancers and a party of Sikh soldiers were standing watching them. All of a sudden the jugglers

jerked away their balls, threw off their jugglers' dresses, and displayed themselves as Mohammedan fanatics. They drew their swords, uttered the Mussulman war cry, and rushed among the tents, slashing right and left. Their shouts appeared to be the signal, for at the same moment two troops of cavalry galloped out from among the tall crops. There was a roar of artillery, and round shot came rolling in from batteries concealed near the Wrestler's Tomb and among the gardens.

The alarm was so sudden, and the attack so utterly unexpected, that it might have thrown many troops into disorder, but those of the column were fresh from Delhi, and prepared for all the incidents of war. The first momentary confusion over, they behaved with the utmost coolness. The Lancers ran to their horses, saddled and mounted; the infantry seized their muskets, and the artillerymen limbered up the guns. The rebel cavalry had calculated on a surprise, when instead the Lancers charged them. They themselves were seized with a panic, they fought for a few minutes, then turned and fled. They galloped back round the parade, and got into the Gwalior road which lay beyond. Along this they made off, pursued by the Lancers and the Sikh horse.

Meanwhile, our infantry had got under arms, and our guns were brought out. The militia at the Metcalfe and the Agra field artillery had also come up. These latter, under Captain Pearson, whose services at the battle of Shahgunge I have already recorded, opened fire on the rebel guns in the gardens, and silenced them, while the Sikhs and English infantry charged the battery at the Tomb. There the main body of the mutineers was drawn up. As our men charged and our cannon shot began to fall, the rebel infantry lost heart, as had previously their cavalry. When their guns were taken they turned

and fled. They fled back through the village and across the fields beyond, till they reached the Gwalior road; along it they continued their flight, carrying one or two of their guns with them.

On the first alarm a mounted officer was dispatched to the fort to summon Colonel Greathed. The road was so blocked by carts and animals and the flying crowds that the officer had much difficulty in making his way, and only reached the fort after considerable delay. Before Colonel Greathed arrived the battle was nearly over. The rebel army had already begun to fly. Colonel Greathed did not see much advantage in continuing the pursuit. He had ordered the troops to be recalled, when Colonel Cotton appeared on the scene. On hearing of the engagement he had ridden out from the fort; he was the senior officer—he at once took the command. Colonel Cotton possessed something of the spirit of the ancient Goths. He loved battle for its own sake; he ordered the pursuit to be recommenced, and joined in it himself with an ardour that communicated itself to his soldiers.

Our cavalry, Sikh and English, soon came up to the enemy. The enemy in the meanwhile had somewhat rallied, and appeared disposed to renew the contest; but as we drew near they lost confidence, and fled on again. The pursuit had continued a couple of miles or so when an accident occurred that for a short time checked it. Our horse artillery had joined the pursuing party, and were every now and then throwing shots into the retreating body of the mutineers. One of these shots was followed by a terrible explosion; it had struck one of the enemy's tumbrels, and the ammunition it contained had blown up. It was the sound and smoke of this explosion that had excited our fears and curiosity as we stood on the gateway of the fort.

This incident caused a temporary check to our advance. The mutineers took advantage of it to rally; they had now reached the spot where their camp was pitched; either the sight of it inspirited them, or perhaps they obtained from it some reinforcements. They formed across the road, and again appeared disposed to dispute our advance; but again, as the Sikhs and English soldiers drew near, the mutineers lost courage. They wavered, then they turned, then they broke into a tumultuous flight, which they continued till they reached the Khara Nuddeé; arrived at the bank, they plunged through the water and dispersed in scattered bands over the country on the other side. As the rebel army was now utterly routed, and had lost camp, baggage, and artillery, Colonel Cotton did not consider it necessary to continue the pursuit. He recalled his troops and returned to the parade ground. The victory had been gained before Colonel Cotton assumed the command; but it was owing to him that in place of being simply defeated, the mutineers, as an army, were annihilated.

It was due to the different officers that, at the commencement, we did not sustain a reverse. From all I could learn, so extreme was the first confusion that there was practically no one in general command. Captain Pearson, I believe, silenced and took the enemy's battery in the garden entirely on his own responsibility. It was the capture of this battery that gave our infantry time to rally, and so turned the tide of the engagement.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BATTLE-FIELD.

HAVING described the battle, I will now give a picture of the scene that the field of the battle presented the following morning. My friend and I left the fort soon after daybreak; we rode first to the great parade ground where the column was encamped. The camp displayed no indications of the conflict; there were neither shattered tents, castaway weapons, nor other relics of the engagement; all was as regular and orderly as if no engagement nor anything else unusual had taken place. But about fifty yards beyond the camp I noticed what seemed several long bundles lying on the ground; on coming nearer I saw they were corpses—they were those of the mutineer troopers. It was at this spot that our Lancers had charged. Each body lay as it had fallen; the position of the corpses showed how short had been the engagement, and how rapid the repulse. The few first of the bodies lay with their faces to the camp—those immediately behind them had been cut down in the act of flying.

One must have fallen beneath an herculean arm—his skull was severed clean in two from crown to chin, half the head lay on either shoulder.

The bodies were all stripped and terribly gashed, but by wounds inflicted after death.

The course by which the mutineers had fled was indicated by the corpses; we followed it round the parade. After that first group we found but few dead bodies, soon none, which showed that the flight must have been more rapid than the pursuit. The broken stalks of the Bâjrâ, which we frequently noticed, also indicated that many of the flying troopers had sought escape by dashing into the fields and hiding among the tall crops.

On entering the Gwalior road we found the corpses lying thicker, as if the flight of the mutineers had here been checked or some fresh pursuers had come up. For more than a mile the road was strewn, though sparingly, with the dead of the enemy. Each body lay where it had fallen; all had fallen in flight, and all were stripped and horribly gashed. I noticed that the death wounds were invariably in the back, the gashes in front. My companion had been in the engagement; he thus explained this circumstance:

The Sikhs fought for plunder, and were animated by a bitter hatred of the Mohammedans, of which religion most of the rebel cavalry were. When one fell the Sikhs dismounted, stripped and plundered the body, then rolled it over on its back and inflicted three gashes, exclaiming, as they delivered each successive cut, 'Take this for the Prophet, and this and this for the three Imaums.'

My friend assured me that what he thus related he had himself witnessed, and he was a man whose word could be relied on. I suspected, however, that the wounds were inflicted not altogether from religious fanaticism, but also as a precaution against treachery; it being a common practice with Indians when wounded to feign death, and when their victors have passed on to rise and attack them. In our earlier wars our English

soldiers not unfrequently in this manner fell victims to their humanity in sparing the wounded and in respecting the apparent dead.

After a mile the corpses ceased; we rode on for some considerable distance and saw none. Then we came on a ghastly spectacle. On the road in front, sitting in a sort of circle, we perceived what appeared a party of men. They seemed as if holding council or conversing. On approaching nearer we found that they were corpses, but each stiffened in the attitude in which death had overtaken it. Some were sitting bolt upright, some stooping, some reclining. One body was sitting as if in life, the head thrown back, the arm raised. The expression was of astonishment, horror, and agony—an expression, perhaps, more indicated by the attitude than displayed by the features, the outlines of which were already becoming indistinct. The figure next him had died in the act of vomiting, his head was bent, the mouth and chest covered with the thick glaze.

But the most horrible object was a corpse that sat bolt upright, his legs stretched straight before him as if he had been blown into the air and so descended. His eyes were open and staring, and his whole body festooned as it were with broad strips of tape. His skin had been torn to pieces—these were the hanging fragments.

The entire surface of the road was charred and blackened; in the centre was a hole, round it lay fragments of wood and iron. It was here that the tumbrel had exploded; these bits of wood and iron were its remains—the corpses round were the victims.

We continued our ride for two miles further, but saw no more dead bodies. We had arrived near the rebel camp when we met some officers returning; they advised us not to venture further, as a party of strange cavalry

had just appeared in sight, and were advancing in this direction. We took their advice and turned our horses; we came back by the track across the fields, along which the mutineer infantry had retreated when driven from their position at the Wrestler's Tomb. The track led us to a small hamlet, through which the mutineers had been pursued. It was a maze of narrow lanes and blind alleys, horrible places for hand to hand encounters. At the end of one alley we came on a heap of five corpses. Finding the exit barred they had turned at bay; all were terribly gashed. As they were Hindoos the motive could not have been fanaticism.

The heaviest fighting, we heard, had taken place near the Wrestler's Tomb, where the Sikhs charged the batteries. We expected to have found the village full of slain; to our surprise we discovered only one body. I came on it unexpectedly. At a turn in a narrow lane I suddenly found myself face to face with the largest native I ever beheld. He was reclining, half sitting against an angle in the wall. His complexion was nearly as dark as that of a negro; his eyes were wide open, and the expression of his countenance was one of great ferocity. I hastily drew my revolver; the man did not move, I saw he was dead. This was one of the few corpses that were neither stripped nor gashed. From the Tomb to the parade ground was not more than a quarter of a mile in distance; in this space we found no corpses.

A few days before the battle there had been a discussion at one of our evening gatherings about the actual number of the enemy's slain in the various engagements before Delhi and elsewhere. Some of the speakers had maintained that the official reports underestimated the losses of the rebels; while others of the party were of opinion that the numbers they recorded were greatly

exaggerated. My friend and I thought that our present inspection of this battle-field would enable us to form some trustworthy opinion as to which of these two views was the most correct, for the enemy's slain had not yet been removed. We had taken with us pencil and paper, and each of us had made separate notes of the bodies we had met with.

Going and returning we had followed both lines of the enemy's retreat, and we had passed over the spots where the chief fighting had taken place. The impression on our minds was that we had beheld some hundreds of corpses. We added up the figures in our notes, and found to our extreme surprise that they amounted to no more than fifty-six !

The discrepancy between our notes and our impressions was so great that we partly retraced our steps and recounted the bodies to ascertain if we had correctly enumerated them. We found that our notes were perfectly accurate. The official estimate of the losses of the rebel army was, if I remember rightly, over a thousand. It was certainly several hundreds. Our enumeration satisfied us that the published accounts of the numbers of the rebels killed and wounded during the mutiny were enormously exaggerated; not wilfully exaggerated, but exaggerated in consequence of the confused and heightened impression made on the senses by the excitement of combat and by the flush of victory. Even we ourselves after calmly inspecting the field should have honestly reported the number of the slain at about six times the amount which our notes showed it really to have been. If the accounts of the battles of our own time on this point are so untrustworthy, how little reliance can be placed on those of barbarous ages and distant antiquity !

The battle was fought on Saturday; Sunday was employed in discussing it; on Monday the row commenced. We had gained a victory, but it might have been a defeat owing to the incorrect information supplied by the civil authorities. Colonel Cotton was furious and demanded the suspension of the magistrate; but then he himself was not free from blame. If the magistrate had given him no warning, he had received plenty from other quarters, to which he had paid no attention. Colonel Greathed expressed his intention of sending in a formal complaint to the Supreme Government, regarding the false intelligence that had nearly led to the destruction of his army; but it was intimated to him that if he did so he himself would be called upon to explain why he had neglected to throw out pickets, and adopt the other usual precautions.

If there had been a defeat I imagine an investigation would have been made and someone punished, but, as we had gained the victory, it was considered best to rest content with it. It was felt on reflection that an inquiry would only injure reputations all round. So after much heartburning and recriminations the affair was allowed to drop.

In the course of time several curious facts came out. It was ascertained that the mutineers had crossed the river for some days, while we thought them safe on the other side. They had crossed with the utmost deliberation, and except ourselves all the country and even the city of Agra were aware that they had done so; and, what was more extraordinary, they had placed their guns in position, and had themselves lain concealed for three whole days among the crops and gardens, within a distance of two miles from the fort, and yet not one of us was aware of their presence.

There was good reason, however, for believing that the intelligence of the enemy was as bad as our own. They knew nothing of the arrival of Colonel Greathed's column, nor even that it was expected. When they saw the tents pitched on the parade ground, they supposed them to be those of the Agra militia, and of the detachment just recalled from over the river. It was the discovery of their mistake that caused their sudden panic and precipitate flight.

The Sikhs acquired a great deal of plunder, for most of the mutineer Sepoys were laden with jewels and money. One Sikh would have obtained a fortune if he could but have held his tongue. He came up to a palanquin; the attendants begged him not to molest it, as the inmate was a lady of rank. The appeal was not one to have much effect on a Sikh. He charged, the attendants fled; the palanquin bearers dropped the palanquin and did the same. As the palanquin fell out of it darted, not a lady, but a man; he ran off into the fields and escaped, for the Sikh was too busy rifling the palanquin to follow him.

The rifling repaid the labour; the Sikh found inside gold and jewels to an enormous amount. Such a prize it was impossible not to boast of. The story reached the ears of the authorities, and the Sikh was compelled to yield up his plunder. He was given a handsome reward, but the reward was nothing to what he would have acquired if he had possessed discretion enough to keep silence.

The enemy's camp was found very neatly pitched; the mutineer officers had appropriated the tents of their English predecessors. The tent occupied by the rebel commandant was a very fine one. It was arranged in the English style with carpets, chairs, and tables. On

the table was a vase of flowers, and from the cross-pole hung some cages full of birds.

A great mass of letters and documents were found in this tent, and among them, it was said, a copy of what is termed 'the present state' of the garrison in the fort; that is, the report daily submitted to the commandant, showing the number of soldiers, how many are fit for duty, and where posted. It was supposed that the other papers and letters would contain some valuable information as to the proceedings and designs of the mutineers. If they did contain any such information it was not made public.

The man who escaped from the palanquin was supposed to be one of the Delhi princes. Whether he was or not was never ascertained, nor what became of him. It was discovered, however, that the original army of the mutineers as it was when it reached the Khara Nuddeé had been largely increased by fugitives from the rebel troops who fought against us at Delhi. It was conjectured that they had come on from Muttra, when the army there broke up and dispersed, as I have already related.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE column remained some days at Agra, then it recrossed the bridge and marched away to the relief of Lucknow. It left behind the sick and wounded, and also a detachment of soldiers and artillery for the protection of Agra. We witnessed the departure of the column with much regret; the inhabitants of the city saw it leave with equal satisfaction. A report had been spread that the Sikhs, as a reward for the victory, were to be allowed one day's plunder, and the report was believed in. The terror inspired by the Sikhs was something extreme. It was not altogether ill-founded, for they were ferocious to a degree, and their habits of plundering inveterate.

Of their ferocity, just after the battle, we had an example. I was returning one afternoon from a ride when I found a pool of blood on the top of the incline. Two Sikhs had been escorting in two prisoners. Having ascended the incline the prisoners refused to proceed further. The Sikhs wasted no time in argument; they drew their swords, and then and there cut the men down.

The march of the column had cleared the Doab of rebel bands, and reopened the communications between Agra and Delhi and Meerut. As the column passed the districts had been reoccupied, and the English authority restored. The result was that Agra became again, in

fact as well as in name, the seat of government, and Colonel Fraser's position was changed from that of a commandant of a fortress to that of the governor of a province. The increase of power brought with it more than the ordinary increase of anxiety. Colonel Fraser was very much hampered by instructions from Calcutta. He was further restricted by an unfortunate order, directing him to guide himself by the advice of the heads of the departments. In the multitude of counsellors there may be safety, but there is also apt to be dissension. In the then confusion the jurisdictions of the various departments were not easily definable, nor were their heads always harmonious. The scenes that occasionally resulted were very amusing, but to Colonel Fraser sufficiently perplexing.

The arrangement, planned in Calcutta with the best intentions, did not either prove very conducive to the public interests. There was so much difficulty in doing anything that very little was done; not even were the houses of the station re-roofed and repaired, nor the surrounding districts reoccupied. Colonel Fraser chiefly employed himself in providing transport for the armies now collecting at Cawnpore—the other authorities less usefully in a renewal of the old contentions regarding the guilt of the Agra native officials.

In the collection of the transport I was a good deal concerned, as most of it came from the Muttra district. The facility with which, at such a time, it was obtained impressed me greatly with the wealth and the vast resources of India. Day by day, week by week, carts, bullocks, camels, ponies, came in by scores, by hundreds. The end of the great parade was soon nearly filled with them. They were continually sent off to the east, and yet the supply never diminished, nor, what was more

surprising, did the country show the slightest indication of the drain thus made on it.

Horses were less plentiful, and the want of them occasioned the Government a good deal of inconvenience; for they were required for the new cavalry, and were with difficulty procured. Learning this, it occurred to me that the horsemen I had obtained from the various landholders might now be made useful. I mentioned the matter to my brother; he approved, and interested Colonel Fraser. The men were paraded, inspected, and an officer, Lieutenant De Kantzow, appointed to drill them into order. This was the origin of that body of cavalry whose services, as 'De Kantzow's horse,' were frequently mentioned in the dispatches of the ensuing campaigns, and have even, I believe, found a place in the histories of the mutiny.

It sometimes happens on a voyage that the passengers are prevented from landing when the port is reached; something such was now our situation. The danger had passed, we might have left with perfect security; but we were not permitted to do so. The detention was felt as very irksome. The fort, which we had regarded as a refuge, we now began to look on as a prison.

The desire to leave it was increased by an incident, an account of which may, perhaps, even after this lapse of time, amuse the reader. The communications with Calcutta had again been interrupted; when reopened, the contents of the first mail made many regret that they had not continued closed. This mail brought a dispatch from Lord Canning, directing that all officers away from their districts should receive only a percentage of their pay till they returned to them. Those whose salaries were thus reduced loudly denounced the injustice of the order. The heads of departments, whom it did

not affect, defended it as a necessary, though to some painful, economy, to which a sentiment of public devotion should cause all to cheerfully submit. The next day their opinions were modified.

Colonel Fraser was very conscientious. It appeared to him that the spirit of the order demanded its more extended application; and he set about elaborating a scheme by which all those whose functions had ceased should lose pay in proportion, whether their head-quarters were at Agra or elsewhere. When the news of this scheme got abroad the consternation of the higher officials was very amusing, as also were the efforts of some of them to escape its operation.

The judges of the chief court at once hired a house in the city, and there repaired with such of their native clerks and pleaders as were not in prison or gone to the rebels. There being no real business to transact they employed themselves in devising rules as to how they would dispose of it when any came before them.

The alarm proved unnecessary—the difficulties in the scheme were so many that Colonel Fraser presently abandoned it.

Colonel Fraser's chief reason at first for remaining in the fort was, I believe, the apprehension that the Gwalior contingent might even now pay us a visit. But this danger soon removed itself. The contingent had remained quiet when it might have injured us; now that the opportunity was past it moved off to its own destruction. It proceeded to Cawnpore, and there, after gaining some successes over General Windham, it was broken to pieces and dispersed by Lord Clyde.

Nevertheless, it was still some time before the districts were reoccupied. Muttra was the first. But its being so was less due to a conviction on the part of the autho-

rities of the propriety of the measure than to their desire to relieve themselves of the importunities of Colonel Cotton. Full of military ardour, brave and energetic to a degree, he chafed under the inaction to which he was condemned, and wearied the Government with petitions to be permitted to sally out on some expedition. Partly to gratify him, partly from a real belief in its utility, it was at length decided to dispatch a column to traverse the neighbouring country, and by a display of force to restore the confidence of the rural population in the power and authority of the English Government. The column was to pass through a part of the Agra district and go on to Muttra. I received orders to accompany it.

I must always repeat that the chief Agra officials were men of decided ability and thoroughly conversant with their ordinary duties. But they were ignorant of the native feeling, especially ignorant of the native feeling at that time. It appeared to me that in the dispatch of this column they were doing that which was very unwise. I was convinced that the passage through the country of such a force would merely increase the evils it was intended to remedy. So far as my position enabled me I pointed out my objections. I represented that for the purpose of restoring order in my district a far smaller force—a few soldiers and a couple of guns—would be much more efficacious. But my representations were not attended to.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LEAVING THE FORT.

AFTER many delays the column at length started. It consisted of some English troops, both infantry and cavalry, the Agra mounted militia, native sappers and miners, many heavy guns, besides field batteries and any amount of Sikhs, horse and foot. The strength of the column in fighting men was, I believe, about eighteen hundred; including camp followers it must have amounted to nearly five thousand. The baggage was carried chiefly on camels, of which there seemed no end. We had also carts, bullocks, and ponies, and several elephants. The names of these huge creatures, suggestive of lightness and elegance, were in curious contrast to their unwieldy appearance. 'Fairy Rose,' 'The Doctor's Darling,' and the 'Blossom of the Forest,' are a few I remember.

The Sikh cavalry were the wildest-looking fellows I ever beheld, and their horses matched them—rough, shaggy, some tall and gaunt, many were ponies, but they possessed the faculty of going, as their riders did that of fighting. They never appeared to knock up; if one did the story was that the Sikh went into the first village and plundered another.

It was a lovely bright morning when we left Agra; the next day we reached Futtehpore Secree. A body of

fanatics, stray mutineers and Sepoys, had occupied the ruins; the column was to dislodge them.

The troops advanced to the gate of the mosque, while my horsemen (I had better now call them De Kantzow's) were sent round to the opposite side of the ruins to cut off the fugitives.

The gateway is magnificent. Situated on the brow of a low hill, it rises one hundred and twenty feet above it. The gates were closed, and no notice being taken of the summons to open them, the guns were brought up and two shots fired; the first went wide, the second, better aimed, smashed open the doors—at the same time, I am sorry to say, carrying away a portion of the delicate stone feathering that ornaments the interior of the arch. Some shells were next thrown in to clear out the enemy, and then the Sikhs and English soldiers charged up the stairs, and to their disappointment found the mosque empty.

This mosque, the most magnificent in India, surrounds a courtyard, in which is the tomb and shrine of the saint Golam Chistee, by whom the building was erected. The shrine, a pretty building of white marble, had originally contained much treasure in the way of silver lamps and other decorations. These had been carried off nearly a century before by Sooruj Mull of Bhurtpore. The present ornaments were of little value, but the Sikhs commenced to plunder them. They tore up the Koran, broke to pieces some old sandal-wood chests, and picked out the mother-of-pearl from the canopy.

While this was going on another party advanced to the old palace, a wilderness of ruins, that adjoins the mosque. Some portions, however, are as perfect as the day they were erected, and from one of these came

matchlock balls. This building, said by tradition to have been the residence of the Emperor Akbar's chief queen, the 'Lady of Jodpore,' is an enclosure of red stone, strong as a fortress. The door was closed, a bag of powder blew it open, and the soldiers rushed in, gallantly led by one of their officers. The enemy were summoned to surrender; they replied by shots. After a desperate resistance they were cut to pieces. They were found to be Mohammedan fanatics, and, I heard, not much more than twelve in number. Their companions, the stray bands of mutineers and the villagers, had had the sense to leave as the column approached. Two or three were captured by Lieutenant De Kantzow, the rest escaped.

Long before noon all was over, the dead removed, and our wounded conveyed to a hospital that had been extemporised in one of the halls of the mosque. Patches of blood on the pavement, and the fragments of the Koran and the shrine remained, however, evidence of the conflict, as also did the fallen masonry. One of the shells had burst below an inner gateway, and the explosion had brought down a waggon-load of stone and mortar. Less effect had been produced by another shell against the wall of the palace. A large blue stain was the only result; a pumpkin could not have produced less apparent injury.

In the course of the afternoon I had evidence of the wildness of the Sikhs. One of my horsemen had an uncle who resided in the neighbourhood; he set out with a friend to visit him. The two rode off very jauntily, they came back in a different plight. On reaching the village they found the Sikhs in possession, the uncle shot, and his house being plundered. They remonstrated, and then had to ride for their lives.

The column left Futtehpore Secree the next morning. It would be tedious to describe its progress, it would also be painful. The suppression of a rebellion is accompanied by much that it is sad to recall, better to forget. All that I saw convinced me how much wiser, how much more humane it would have been had my recommendations been adopted. If, instead of sending this army to traverse the country, I had been allowed a few soldiers for my personal protection, and a couple of guns to overawe the villagers, the rebel bands would have dispersed of themselves, and the rural population would have quieted as they realised the facts of our victories at Delhi and Lucknow. As a fighting force the column was admirable, and as a scourge and a terror no better instrument could have been selected. But only the extreme of official pedantry could have imagined that its presence would restore confidence or regain attachment. The Sikhs were under no sort of discipline beyond that essential for fighting—they plundered right and left; their passage through the country increased the disturbances they were sent to suppress.

The Government at Agra was composed, as I have often remarked already, of very able men; but in the dispatch of this column, as in almost all their measures during the disturbances, they showed that even able men, accustomed to routine, are unsuited to deal with entirely novel conditions.

When the column left Agra it was intended that it should proceed to the neighbourhood of Delhi, cross the Jumna, and return through the Doab. Its presence near Delhi might, perhaps, have been useful; for the country there was still disturbed, and full of fragments of the broken rebel armies. But this plan was not adhered to. The events at Cawnpore made Colonel

Fraser anxious about the safety of the fort. When the column had reached the extremity of the Muttra district it was suddenly recalled.

In the East a retrograde movement is invariably attributed to fear or disaster. The northern part of the district had from the first been turbulent, and though the nearest to Delhi, was the least influenced by its fall, the last to believe in it. As our column retired a report spread that our armies had been defeated before Lucknow. As we retreated the country rose. The condition of things was worse than before we advanced. The villagers sallied out and attacked stragglers. On one occasion they killed two of our horsemen who had gone on in advance to order forage. On reaching the encamping ground we found them lying dead; their bodies were warm, but the dogs had eaten off their faces.

The column went on to Agra. I remained at Muttra with Lieutenant De Kantzow, Mr. Joyce, and the young Customs' officer who had been my companion at Hodul. I had procured for him a good appointment in the Revenue. After some days we crossed the river and proceeded to the east of the district. Finding the country there quiet I went into Agra, and brought out A—— and our little girl. Other officers and ladies joined us, and we were soon a large party. The weather was delightful, and there was just sufficient danger to be a source of pleasant excitement. On one occasion a mutinous army, some thousands strong, burst through the district and nearly surprised us. We had to strike our camp at midnight and march off in haste to avoid them.

The appearance of the country little indicated the anarchy that had so long prevailed. There seemed as many men, as many carts, and as many animals as in previous times; nor did the business of agriculture appear

to have been interrupted. The whole district was one sheet of fresh green crops. But here and there we came on a village standing desolate, and the fields around it relapsing into jungle. The story was always the same: the village had been attacked by its neighbours, and the inhabitants killed or driven away.

The evidence of the disorder was more apparent in the towns. Hardly one had escaped plundering. The principal streets were often half a heap of ruins—the verandahs broken, every shop wrecked. The temples occasionally had shared the fate of the houses. I saw several that had been nearly destroyed: the idols were broken, the furniture smashed, and the sacred books torn in fragments, and whatever valuables the shrine had possessed had been carried off. The plunderers were always Hindoos, but of some different sect.

The mosques, however, had never been molested. The Mohammedans had often ill-treated the Hindoos, but the Hindoos had rarely, so far as I knew, or never retaliated. Their forbearance was the result not of generosity, simply of fear; for, as I have already said, the Mohammedans possess the faculty of combination—the Hindoos do not. In this difference of temperament the effect of religion was shown in modifying the character of a people; for both Hindoos and Mohammedans were of the same race, and from time immemorial had inhabited together the same country.

The destruction of property and the loss of life in the various plunderings and affrays must have been very great. How great I can form no estimate. But no mistake could be greater than that of the officials at Agra, that the natives had become weary of the anarchy. After a longer experience of it no doubt they would have become so, but at present it was a condition of things

that entirely suited them. They paid no revenue, they had enriched themselves with the plunder of the towns, and wiped off their debts to the Bunniahs.

At the commencement of the new year I received promotion, and was transferred to a district in the extreme north. After a long journey we reached our new station. Lying beyond the track of the mutineers, it had escaped destruction. For the first time we beheld neither blackened walls nor roofless houses. Situated near the foot of the Lower Himalayas, the climate was cold at this season, and the skies occasionally cloudy. A friend received us. As we entered his house a bright wood fire was burning on the hearth, the table was spread for breakfast; we looked out on pretty grounds resembling an English park. With a delight which I can even now recall, we found ourselves again amid the comforts of peace and civilisation.

In a day or two the clouds cleared and displayed the vast peaks of the snowy range rising white and glistening far above the horizon, looking down, so it seemed to me, on the war and turmoil below calm and indifferent, as they had centuries ago on the hordes of Timour, or, long ages before, on the armies of Alexander.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCLUSION.

After leaving Muttra I had no further direct concern with the mutinies. I will, however, briefly relate the leading events that accompanied their suppression. Early in the year Lucknow was relieved, and the Gwalior contingent dispersed. The lower part of the Doab being now cleared of the rebels, Lord Canning left Calcutta and assumed charge of the Upper Provinces. He fixed his residence at Allahabad, to which station he transferred the seat of government. In the course of the year Lucknow was captured and Rohilcund reoccupied. So far as these provinces were concerned the mutiny was ended. It was not, however, till the lapse of another year that order was restored in Central India and other places.

In November 1858, a general amnesty was proclaimed, and the Queen assumed the sovereignty of India. Her doing so gave great satisfaction to the natives, but for a reason which the English public would not have imagined, and of which I do not believe it is even now aware. The natives were under the belief that the East India Company farmed the country from the English Crown. They supposed, consequently, that the abolition of the Company would be followed by a remission of revenue to the extent of the profits which

the Company had been in the habit of receiving. They also imagined that the direct government by the Queen would be accompanied by the establishment of a court, and a display of that splendour so congenial to their tastes.

In the suppression of the mutinies, or rather in what followed their suppression, there were displayed many of the best English characteristics, but also some of our qualities less praiseworthy. There was no retaliation, no revenge; but, on the other hand, there was that rigid adherence to rule, that want of sympathy with the feelings of the people which, though perhaps it makes our government successful, certainly prevents it from being loved.

The revenue was demanded and its payment enforced where it had already been collected by the rebel authorities, and at a time and in parts of the country where those authorities were *de facto* sovereigns. Escaped prisoners were punished for not surrendering themselves under proclamations of the existence of which they could not have heard, and of which, if they had heard, it was impossible they could have obeyed. Also the rural disturbers were punished in accordance with laws which, at the time when the disturbances occurred, had practically ceased to exist. It would have been more merciful—it would also have been wiser—if over such offences there had been drawn a veil. Till the next mutiny these crimes would not be repeated, and then no amount of present severity would prevent their recurrence.

It was noticeable that those English officials who, during the crisis of the mutiny, had been the most moderate, the most averse to violence, were, now that the mutiny was suppressed, the least inclined to show generosity.

Human beings are of more value than the buildings which are the work of their hands. Nevertheless, it is possible that in some future age our Government may be condemned for its wanton destruction of the native edifices, when its humanity and its harshness to the natives themselves have alike been forgotten. This destruction I could never contemplate without regret, without indignation.

The palace of Delhi was the culminating effort of Indian art. It was an edifice the like of which had not before existed, and in all probability would not again appear, for it was the result of conditions not likely to be repeated. Yet the greater portion of it was deliberately pulled to pieces, and the materials sold by auction. Its destruction was not the work of the soldiery, nor was it intended as an act of punishment or of retribution; nor can it be excused by the impulse of anger or revenge. It was directed from motives of the merest parsimony, and not till the passions of the time had had leisure to cool.

What occurred at Delhi happened at Lucknow. The palace there was similarly and equally wantonly destroyed. It was the same everywhere—no beauty, no historical associations served to protect an edifice if an idea of economy or a fancy for improvement suggested its removal. Even the majestic ruins of the fort of Juanpore were blown to pieces to satisfy the idle crotchet of an engineer.

During the mutiny I learnt more of the natives than I had during all the many years of my previous residence in the country. Compared with what other nations would have been under similar circumstances, they were not more cruel, they were certainly less violent. In many instances individuals among them exhibited great fidelity.

I learnt to appreciate more than I had previously their many amiable qualities, but at the same time I became more aware of their besetting faults of falsehood and treachery. They made promises, they broke them—they betrayed each other, they made friends again—with the readiness, the want of seriousness of so many children.

It may interest the reader to learn the fate of some of those whose names have been prominent in my narrative. Colonel Cotton caught a cold on the march; it became worse, he went to Mussoorie, and there died. He was engaged to be married to a lady to whom a curious fate seemed to attach. She had been exceedingly pretty, and often engaged, but the engagements were invariably terminated by the death, violent or sudden, of her *fiancé* in each case.

Colonel Fraser did not long survive him. When no longer sustained by the excitement of danger, his strength gave way, and he sank rapidly; he died in the following July, and also at Mussoorie. The youngest of the Seths was alive when I left India; the other two brothers had been dead some years, as also had Dillawar Khan, our faithful guide to Agra on the night of the battle. I procured for Mr. Joyce a good appointment in the Revenue Department; when I left India he was doing well.

The Bhurtpore chiefs were never called to account for their conduct, nor was Ruggonath Sing compelled to restore the property belonging to me which he had carried off, nor was I compensated for its loss. He appeared at Lord Canning's grand durbar in 1859 with as much assurance as if he had been the most loyal of subjects.

After the final suppression of the mutiny, there was a very liberal distribution of honours and rewards, but none fell to me, nor in this was I singular. Lord

Canning conceived the idea, not altogether without reason, that the Agra authorities had displayed great incapacity, and in his disapproval of the authorities he included their subordinates. Also, he was by temperament much more disposed to appreciate zeal, when displayed in ordinary routine, than when exhibited in the irregular manner that the time of disorder demanded. Hence it followed that many who had been exposed to no danger, who had suffered no losses, who had even been in England during the time of peril, were honoured and rewarded; while those were passed over unnoticed who, like myself, had borne the heat and burden of that terrible day.

What was the case with the English and Christians was the case also with the natives. So ill-proportioned to the services of the recipients were often their recompense, that the fact gave rise to a proverb, at the time much quoted: 'Jysah ghudder, wysah inâm' ('As the disturbance, so the reward')—meaning that in both matters there was equal confusion. Much of this was inevitable, but a good deal might have been avoided. In some cases it was, I am sorry to say, the indirect result of those dissensions among the authorities that had prevailed at Agra both before and after our entry into the fort. When a reward was proposed for a native, the point too often considered was not what has he done? but 'who has recommended him?'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHAT CAUSED THE MUTINY?

ALTHOUGH so many years have elapsed, this inquiry cannot be considered as devoid of interest. The mutiny must have had some causes, and if those causes still exist they may, when the opportunity is favourable, give rise to another.

The first consideration is, was the mutiny a mere military revolt or the rising against us of the population?

At the time this question was debated in India with great acrimony. Now that the facts can be calmly considered there is not much room for difference of opinion.

The case was this—the army revolted; the population left to itself ceased to yield obedience. The revenue was not paid nor the law regarded. Such a condition of things is rebellion, by whatever name it may be designated—whatever explanation may be given of its existence.

The causes of the mutiny of the army I shall not consider; they were in part purely military, in part a discontent shared by the general population. I shall confine myself to the consideration of the general rebellion, and of that discontent which caused the population to throw off our rule so soon as the mutiny of the army enabled them to do so.

The causes assigned by the English, then and since,

are many and very contradictory. It will be more profitable to consider those alleged by the natives themselves. They may be reduced to three:—

1. The severity of the taxation.
2. The impoverishment of the country.
3. The design of the English Government to convert them to Christianity.

The last cause was the one always the most insisted on.

It will be interesting to consider how an idea could have arisen so contrary to the truth. The native religions, the Hindoo especially, are ceremonial; they prescibe the law, the public policy to a great extent, even the habits of life of their followers. Such being the case, it resulted that as our system of government developed, it came into conflict with the secular portion of the native religions. It prohibited what those religions permitted or enjoined; it sanctioned what they condemned. The actual interference was not great, but it was supposed to foreshadow more.

Again, although our Government did not proselytise, it educated. It endeavoured by schools and otherwise to propagate the ideas and the habits of modern European civilisation. These ideas, these habits were by the natives regarded as the results of our religion; the propagation of them was considered, therefore, as the disguised propagation of Christianity.

The belief in the impoverishment of the country was similarly based on incorrect inferences from actual facts. Under our rule the wealth of India had greatly increased, but being more equally distributed it was less apparent. But with the wealth the population had also increased, and, as an accompaniment, the poverty. Relatively less, it was actually greater. Further, though our Govern-

ment spent more than its native predecessors, its expenditure was not of a kind that so much impressed the popular imagination.

There was no court, no erection of magnificent buildings, no processions or entertainments. The absence of these things was regretted; and it also gave rise to the idea that the money formerly expended on them was now transmitted to England.

The complaints of the severity of the taxation, though exaggerated, were not devoid of foundation. Our land revenue was undoubtedly too highly assessed, and our system of enforcing payment by the sale of the land made its severity the more felt. Also our law, by assisting the extortions of the Bunniahs, cast on our Government the odium of much of their rapacity.

To these three great causes of complaint must be added that vague discontent which is necessarily and invariably produced by the domination of an alien race, especially of a race whose habits, ideas, and sentiments differ widely from those of the people they rule.

At its commencement our rule was not unpopular; individually, we ourselves were often liked; as a body, we were respected. It would be interesting to trace the steps by which these feelings became changed to that animosity that was exhibited towards us during the mutiny, but space will not permit.

The causes of the change of feeling may be thus indicated:—

First: As the generation died out who had experienced the disorder and oppression that preceded our rule, the benefits of our rule were no longer so sensibly appreciated.

Secondly: As our system of government developed, so at the same time did its want of harmony with the

native feeling become apparent. At first we did little more than collect the revenue and maintain order; as time went on, we substituted our laws and institutions for those that were indigenous to the country.

Thirdly: As our numbers increased there arose something of the antagonism of race; and as our Empire extended, and the dominions of sovereign after sovereign were absorbed into it, there became roused against us a feeling of patriotism. The India of the natives seemed to them threatened with extinction. The annexations of Lord Dalhousie, especially that of Oude, were undoubtedly the immediate cause of the mutiny.

To these causes must be added Mohammedan fanaticism. The Mohammedans, though the smaller portion of the population, are the most energetic, the most dangerous. Our rule, never popular with them, had of late become the object of their aversion: this was partly because latterly, by raising the condition of the Hindoos, we had deprived them—the Mohammedans—of their practical monopoly of Government employment, and of the domination of their law, their religion, and their language; partly, their aversion was due to that revival of Mohammedan fanaticism which, born during the present century in Arabia, had some few years previous to the mutiny become diffused throughout India.

To sum up, the discontent which produced the mutiny arose from causes partly unpreventible, but it was partly also the result of conditions which might have been avoided. By no wisdom, by no system, could we have prevented the antagonism of race, or the dislike of an alien rule, or the hostility of Mohammedan fanaticism. But we might have modified the discontent arising from these causes by a less severe taxation, by more moderation in annexing fresh territories, and

generally by more adapting our system of government to the native sentiment.

During the disturbances certain facts were apparent which are worthy of consideration.

First: That the classes whom our rule had specially benefited, namely, the low castes and the cultivators of the soil, were those who displayed the most marked hostility to it.

Secondly: That the great pensioners and fund-holders, those whose interests appeared to be identified with ours, almost invariably turned against us; as, also, with hardly an exception, did those natives who had received an English education or adopted English habits.

Thirdly: That the only class on whose fidelity it was found we could rely was the one whom our policy had discountenanced, and whose increase it had prevented, namely, the native Christians.

One more remark and I have done. It is never to be forgotten that the mutiny came upon us without sign or warning. The country was never so prosperous, the people were never more apparently contented, than when they burst into insurrection. It was from a cloudless sky that that thunderbolt descended.

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